

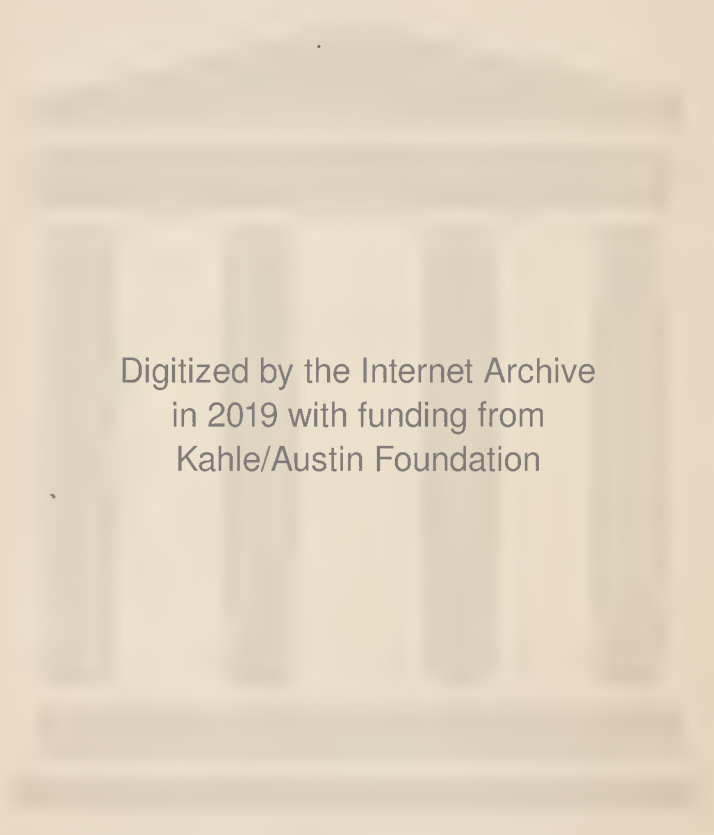


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THE LIFE
OF
JONATHAN SWIFT





JONATHAN SWIFT.

From the bust by Rodolphe in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin.

THE LIFE
OF
JONATHAN SWIFT

DEAN OF ST. PATRICK'S, DUBLIN

BY
HENRY CRAIK

SECOND EDITION. WITH PORTRAITS

VOL. I

London
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AND NEW YORK

1894

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TO

EDMUND LAW LUSHINGTON

M.A., LL.D., ETC.,

LATE PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK ;

NOT AS AN OFFERING WORTHY OF ACCEPTANCE

BUT THAT I MAY PLACE ON RECORD

MY GRATITUDE

FOR HIS TEACHING, HIS INFLUENCE, AND HIS EXAMPLE

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN preparing for the press a Second Edition of this book, I have availed myself of a few hints and corrections, for which I am indebted to my readers and critics. But the book remains, practically, as it was. It was the fruit of many years' study of the subject; and having spent a large part of such leisure as I have had, during the eleven years which have passed since the First Edition appeared, in further study of Swift, and in editing selections from his works, I have not seen reason to alter my opinions on his life, or my conception of his character and work.

It does not seem to me to be the province of the biographer to spend much time over the discussion of literary theories, or to diverge largely into general history. But I have spared no pains, and have omitted the study of no sources, which might help towards a full elucidation of the incidents of Swift's life, of his relation to his contemporaries, or of the part he played in the literary and political history of

his time. I hope that in these pages no important incident is omitted, no person passed over whose relation to him is in any degree memorable, and no movement of the time in which he played a considerable part, left without investigation. I trust that the narrative is an accurate and a faithful one, and as full as the limits I imposed upon myself have permitted. I offer it as my contribution to the elucidation of a character of singular interest in our literary history.

H. C.

LONDON, *June* 1894.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THREE works bearing on the biography of Swift appeared within the decade that followed his death. The first of these was the *Remarks* of Lord Orrery, who had known Swift only in his later years, and whose book consists chiefly of stilted literary criticism supplemented by scattered biographical details. The *Remarks* appeared in November, 1751: and so great was the interest in the subject, that Lord Orrery has noted in his own copy of the book, that within a month of its publication 7500 copies had been sold.¹ It was followed by the anonymous *Observations* of Dr. Delany in 1754: and by Deane Swift's *Essay* in 1755. Each of these works has its own value. Lord Orrery gives us a fairly vivid picture of Swift's manner in old age. Delany speaks with the advantage of greater judgment, and longer personal intimacy: but his defence of Swift is somewhat cold and timid, and runs upon narrow and conventional lines. Deane Swift, with all his eccentricity, yet gives us not a few per-

¹ MS. note by Lord Orrery in a copy of the *Remarks* now in the possession of Lord Cork.

sonal reminiscences of interest, mixed with much that is absurd.

Hawkesworth's *Life* followed in 1755; but although more complete as a biography than any of those already noticed, it did little more than sum up in narrative form the current accounts of Swift. The first *Life* of Swift that took its place in literature was that of Johnson, published among the *Lives of the Poets* in 1778. But such new material as he possessed, Johnson had previously given to Hawkesworth: he did not afford either the time or the labour necessary to elucidate difficulties, or to study character: and even the vigorous and trenchant criticism for which the *Life* is valuable, is marred by the inveterate grudge which, for whatever reason, Johnson bore to Swift.

In 1784, the younger Sheridan wrote his *Life* of Swift. As a boy, he had known Swift in decay: as a boy, also, he had received from his father reminiscences of their long friendship. In spite of the preternatural dulness, for which Johnson's well-known phrase has made him celebrated, Sheridan always labours to be honest; and even his distant recollection of what his father had told him could not fail to give some interest to his story. But his *Life* brings us no nearer to the real Swift: gives us little insight into his character: and scarcely attempts to enter into his moods, or to discern the motives that give a clue to much of the mystery that gathers round him.

Scott, whose *Life* first appeared in 1814, was the first to deal in a broad and generous spirit with the character of Swift. Rapid and cursory as the biography often is, Scott's genius did more for Swift than many a workman of greater care and elaboration could have achieved. He opened up for the first time the human interest that gathered about the story, so long the theme of petty and one-sided judgments, so long measured by the narrow rules of sects and parties that Swift abhorred. He made it plain that the defence of Swift was no forlorn hope of paradox, but was possible to one whose view of human nature was the most genial, whose grasp of character was the most catholic.

But Scott had not time to do all that was required. He professed himself satisfied "to condense the information afforded by Mr. Sheridan, Lord Orrery, Dr. Delany, Deane Swift, Dr. Johnson, and others, into one distinct and comprehensible narrative." He has, indeed, done much more than this: but a book written on such a plan, could not, even in Scott's hands, supply all that was wanted in a biography of Swift. From the earlier biographers there had grown up a traditional formality of manner in apology, in defence, and even in eulogy, adopted by timid advocates, to suit a timid public. When, for instance, Dr. Delany asks us to admire Swift because he gained the First Fruits for the Irish Church: or because he suggested

the building of fifty churches in London : or because he administered the revenues of his cathedral with economy, and paid much attention to the pronunciation of those who officiated there—we feel that, however estimable in their way, these are scarcely the acts that have contributed to keep alive a vivid interest in Swift, and that those with whom such pleas were likely to have much weight, were scarcely fit to judge of the wayward and often morbid genius of Swift. Yet Scott, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps from haste, has adopted much of this conventional manner in his biography. He claims admiration for Swift, “in spite of the antiquated and unpopular nature of his politics”: “in spite of the misanthropical tone of some of his writings”: and, elsewhere, because of “his sincere and devout belief in the truths of Christianity.” But before we begin to make allowances for Swift’s politics, as antiquated and unpopular, we must be sure that we have found out the true key to their adoption by one very considerably in advance of the current opinion of his own or of any other time. If we look upon his misanthropy as only an occasional blemish which mars his genius, and which we must endeavour either to forgive or to forget, the chances are that, in our apology, we may miss an essential trait in Swift’s character, whose origin we should rather seek to explain, and whose influence in his work it is our business to trace. As

to his acceptance of religious dogma, without denying or doubting its sincerity, may we not doubt whether we have described it rightly, in labelling it with the mark of conventional and respectable orthodoxy?

Scott has not thought it necessary to enter much more fully than previous biographers into questions like these. He has given us a clear, succinct, and graphic narrative: but on the difficult passages in Swift's life he has scarcely thrown fresh light. Of his new matter, some was derived from authorities scarcely deserving the regard which Scott was induced to give them.

In his *History of St. Patrick's*, published in 1820, Mr. Monck Mason devoted a long chapter to the life of Swift: but it consists chiefly of tedious controversy on a few doubtful points, and neither attempts to gauge his character from any broad point of view, nor has appreciably affected the current judgment on his life.

Scott's Life, while it revived the interest in Swift, produced at the same time a renewal of that adverse criticism which had never wanted its representatives. Jeffrey wrote a fierce diatribe in 1816, outdoing the usual narrowness of the clique to which he belonged, in the complacency with which he triumphs over the "cold, timid, and superficial genius" of the age of Swift, and Addison, and Pope: and in the bitterness with which he attacks the honesty, the morals, and

the humanity of Swift. All that was wayward and morbid in the genius of Swift : all that bore hardly on him in the record of his life : all the melancholy that overcast him, was dragged before the bar of an unsympathetic criticism, by one whose political creed taught him, as its first article, the absolute rectitude of all Swift's political opponents, the absolute turpitude of all his friends.

This view of Swift gained further prevalence by the help of a greater than Jeffrey. The genius of Macaulay cast a lurid gloom over the memory of Swift, even though it made the impression of Swift's power more vivid. Macaulay's picture has been a lasting one. The world has not lost sight of the tragic interest that gathers about Swift's life : but it has left unnoticed or forgotten how keenly sensitive was the heart buried under all that weight of misanthropy and cynicism ; how much his pride was rooted in earnestness, his anger in hatred of oppression.

It was the object of the late Mr. Forster to apply a clearer light and a more sympathetic criticism to the intricacies of Swift's career. His unstinted enthusiasm may, at times, have impaired his judgment in regard to Swift, but even its exaggeration was no bad quality in a biographer. Death arrested his task, but not before Mr. Forster had accomplished enough to lay any fresh biographer under a heavy debt. Not only did he gather much new material,

but he entered so minutely into the earlier part of Swift's career, as to leave but few points undiscussed, —we might even say, undecided.

In taking up the task, thus fallen from more competent hands, it was necessary to reconsider the plan of the book. Mr. Forster intended his *Life* to be in three volumes : and it is clear that if told throughout with the copiousness of annotation and illustration to be found in the first volume, the story of Swift could not have been completed in less space. But whether so long a biography is either wanted, or necessary to make the picture clear and true, may well be doubted. It is impossible, in any consecutive narrative, to state, to discuss, to adopt, or to repudiate, each opposing view : or to refer in detail to the mass of miscellaneous trifles which have crowded about the name of Swift, and have been made to do duty in his biography. We are embarrassed with the mass of such material, and it becomes a first necessity, in order to bring the narrative within fair compass, and even to give to it clearness and consistency, to strip off much of the redundant matter, to lay aside much of the endless miscellaneous gossip, and to arrange, in their due proportions, the greater and the lesser actions of Swift's life.

The present biography is therefore confined to one volume : and where possible, the controversial matter has been relegated to Appendices, so as to prevent the

interruption of the narrative by argument too much detailed. However doubtful we may continue to be as to some points, it is as much for the advantage of biography as of the State, that there should be some "end of litigation," and that we should, sooner or later, strike a balance between contending views, as fairly as we may.

In my task I have had the advantage of access to all the important material gathered by Mr. Forster, including what is now in South Kensington Museum, and the unpublished letters from Swift to Archdeacon Walls, belonging to Mr. Murray. The kindness of others has enabled me to add to this. In the first place, I have been entrusted by the Earl of Cork with the MSS. belonging to him, as left by Lord Orrery. These include not only several unpublished letters from Swift to Lord Orrery during the later years of his life, but also the common-place books of Lord Orrery containing his own memoranda on Swift, and careful transcripts of several letters from Deane Swift relating to the closing years of the Dean. Mr. Frederick Locker has given me access to certain MSS. in his possession, which were in Scott's hands, but the importance of one of which, at least, he overlooked. From Major Stopford I have obtained letters from Swift to Dr. Stopford : and through Mr. Elwin I have obtained transcripts of some letters now at Longleat.

The Sundon and Suffolk MSS. in the British Museum have thrown some light on Swift's later life, and have enabled me to correct some mistakes arising from errors in the printed copies. To Mr. Reynell I owe transcripts of certain letters from the Records at Armagh : and the Historical MSS. Commissioners have recently published some letters that help us to facts of Swift's life.

I have to thank others for assistance of a different kind : and, first and chiefly, Mr. Elwin, whose learning, great as it is, is not greater than the generosity with which he comes to the help of others working in the same field. Not only has he placed at my disposal results of his own research, but he has given me invaluable advice and aid in regard to some of the most serious difficulties of Swift's life. My thanks are also due to Dr. Ingram, Librarian of Trinity College, Dublin, and to others amongst the Fellows of that Society, for assistance during my visits to their Library : to Dr. Norman Moore, for the help he has afforded me from a large knowledge at once of Irish affairs and of literature : to those in charge of the Forster and Dyce Collection at South Kensington ; and to the officials of the Royal Irish Academy, for assistance in consulting the rich collection of pamphlets, on Irish affairs, there stored. In the attempt to realize as far as possible the actual surroundings of Swift, I have visited most of the localities connected with

his name. In Dublin, I had the advantage of the wide local lore of the Reverend Mr. Carroll, of St. Bride's, to whom so many visitors to Dublin are indebted for a knowledge of its historic spots, and who has also supplied me with copies of some documents of interest. And at places so widely apart as Kilkenny, and Mullingar: Trim, Laracor, and St. Patrick's: Celbridge and Howth: Goodrich and Moor Park, I have had but one experience, that of ready and kindly help.

H. C.

LONDON, *October* 1882.

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CHAPTER I

SWIFT'S FAMILY AND EARLY LIFE

1667-1692

ÆTAT. *From birth to 24*

New House Farm, Goodrich—The Swiftes at Rotherham—At Canterbury—The Reverend Thomas Swift—His sufferings in the Royalist cause—His sons in Ireland—Godwin Swift's success—Jonathan, the Elder—His marriage—Death—Birth of JONATHAN SWIFT—Childhood—At Kilkenny school—Stories of school life—The troubles of his early days—At Trinity College, Dublin—His Bachelor's degree—The *specialis gratia*—Its real meaning—Three years of close reading—Death of his uncle Godwin—Help from other kinsmen—An unexpected visitor—The break-up of 1688—Swift in England—With his mother at Leicester—Character of Swift's mother—Life at Leicester—Goes to Sir William Temple at Moor Park—Swift's surroundings there—Character and position of Temple—Other inmates of the house—End of the first residence with Temple—Swift in Ireland—Returns to Temple—Obtains a master's degree at Oxford by Temple's help—His altered position in this second residence.

WITHIN a few minutes' walk of the pleasant village of Goodrich, near Ross, there stands a house, now the solitary memorial of a man not unnoticeable even for his own doings, but with a claim to more enduring fame in connexion with the subject of this biography.

Amongst all his ancestors and kinsfolk, it was the builder of this house, whose memory JONATHAN SWIFT regarded with the greatest veneration, and from whom he inherited not a few of his characteristic traits. It was to this house that Swift looked, even in his later years, as the home of his family : and in the doings of its builder he found what attracted him most in all that family's annals. It was no ordinary dwelling.

"The architecture," to use the words of Swift himself, "denotes the builder to have been somewhat whimsical and singular, and very much towards a projector."¹ Fortunately we are yet able to confirm for ourselves the truth of the description. The house has now fallen into utter disrepair, but there is clearly something out of the common in the design. Separated from the village and the church by a small hill, it overlooks a quiet valley near the Wye. It is, as one who owned it a century and a half ago says, like three houses joining at one central point.² It is a big house, strong and stable : its mullioned windows open to the sun and to the wide-stretching country at every point of the compass : large and roomy enough to provide for its owner's ample family of "ten sons and three or four daughters," and yet with no useless space for halls or corridors or wide staircases. These last creep up in the corners like the winding steps in a turret. But odd as the house is, some of the rooms are handsome even in their fallen estate. Most of all

¹ Autobiographical Anecdotes. See Appendix I.

² Deane Swift, the younger, in his *Essay* on the Dean.

it is remarkable for its enormous and burrowing cellars, reached from one room by a trap-door, large enough and strong enough to store away and protect not only fugitives and their provisions, but in case of need even cattle and other live stock as well. When the house was built, in 1636, as the date on its door-post tells us, its owner could have had no idea of the uses to which these cellars were soon to be put : and it argued a strange lavishness of space and labour, or a strange craving after some safe retreat even from an imagined danger, that this patriarchal parson should have built his house on such a plan.

The builder of this strange dwelling was the Reverend Thomas Swift, Vicar of Goodrich, and grandfather of JONATHAN SWIFT, the Dean of St. Patrick's. The original seat of the family was in Yorkshire, and Rotherham Church still contains a brass to the memory of Robert Swifte and his wife, who died there in the sixteenth century.¹ From this north-country stock there came two branches, both of which had eventually some connexion with Ireland. One branch gained some notoriety by producing a

¹ The epitaph runs thus :—"Here under this Tombe are placyd and buried the bodyes of Robarte Swifte Esquire and Anne his fyrste wyfe, who lyvde manye yeares in this towne of Rotherham in vertuus fame, grett wellthe and good woorschip. They were pytyfulle to the poore and relevyd them lyberallye and to theyr ffrends no les faythfulle then Bountyfulle. Trulye they ffearyd God who Plentiuslye powryd his Blessings uppon them. The sayd Anne dyed in the moneth of June in the yere of o^r lord God 1539, in the 61 year of hur age and the sayd Robarte Deptyd y^e VIII day of August in the yere of o^r lorde God 1561 in the 84 yeare of his age on whose sowles with all Chrystyn Sowlls Thomnipotent lorde have marcy Amen."

certain Barnam Swifte, in whom the vein of eccentricity that appears in all the ramifications of the family, made itself oddly felt. His pursuit of that somewhat cumbrous form of wit and humour that pleased under James the First, gained for him the sobriquet of Cavaliero Swifte: and by Charles the First he was created, in 1627, an Irish Viscount under the title of Lord Carlingford. He left no son: but his daughters and co-heiresses were married, one to the Fielding who bore in society the name of "handsome Fielding,"¹ and the other to Lord Eglinton.

The other branch, pursuing more humble and prosaic lives, passed from Yorkshire to Kent, and were established before the close of the sixteenth century at Canterbury.

One Thomas Swift, whom we may take to be the son of Robert Swifte of Rotherham, became preacher at St. Andrews, Canterbury, about 1570: and his son William Swift succeeded him, in 1592,² and married a Miss Philpot, an heiress and a shrew. He had one son: and with this son we come to the builder of the

¹ This was the Fielding who not only squandered all that his first wife brought him, but to whom the Duchess of Cleveland afterwards trusted herself and her illgotten gains, to find the last frittered away, and herself so cruelly treated as to require the protection of the law.

² In the British Museum there is a funeral sermon preached by William Swift, in 1621, on "that painful and faithful servant of Jesns Christ, Mr. Thomas Wilson." The discourse has no special interest, except that, from its strong anti-Catholic views, we may suppose religious differences to have had something to do with sending this branch of the family from the ancestral home at Rotherham, where Robert Swifte had been buried as a devout Roman Catholic, only nine years before his son quitted that home for Canterbury.

strange house at Goodrich, and to the first member of the Dean's family in whom peculiarities like his own were strongly marked, and whose memory was so cherished by him that it seems not a little to have affected his life and opinions.

This Thomas Swift, born in 1595, became a man of some mark amid stirring scenes. He was an only son : but unlike most only sons, was brought up under the severe discipline of a mother whose reputation as a termagant lived after her. Of her wealth he obtained but a small share, being disinherited, we are told, on account of some boyish peccadillo : and, left to his own resources, save for a small estate at Goodrich, he entered the Church, and early in the reign of Charles I., obtained the living of Goodrich, with which locality his memory is linked. He married a Miss Elizabeth Dryden,¹ of that Northamptonshire family soon to be made famous by the poet to whose genius, for reasons that will be seen hereafter, his "cousin" Jonathan Swift was so obstinately blind, and whose faults and prodigalities alone he remembered.

During the early years of his incumbency, Thomas Swift was busied with the quiet performance of his duties, and with providing for the future of a rapidly growing family. He bought more land in his own parish, and in 1636, while the country was astir with

¹ She was niece to Sir Erasmus Dryden, the poet's grandfather. From the Dryden family, the Swifts adopted not only Dryden as a Christian name, but also Jonathan—the name of the Dean's father and his own. The passing criticism from Dryden to Swift, then in the sensitivity of budding authorship—"Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet"—may well have laid the seeds of Swift's inveterate hostility to his kinsman's fame.

discussions about ship-money, and vague threatenings of struggles to come, he was building the house destined to stand many a siege.

In 1640 was born, being the seventh or eighth in the series of sons, Jonathan, the father of our author : and while he was still an infant in arms, the Rebellion broke out. In spite of his profession, the Vicar of Goodrich was of too fervent a spirit to hold aloof from the struggle. It had scarcely opened before he became known amongst the Parliamentary ranks for a delinquent. He had preached an ultra-royalist sermon in the neighbouring town of Ross : he was suspected of introducing arms on behalf of the Royalist cause into Monmouthshire : and he was known to be a man of mark in the district. He threw himself into the struggle heart and soul : and the combat was so hot about the banks of the Wye, that he soon felt the realities of civil war. The royal standard had been raised in Nottingham in August, 1642. In October of the same year, Thomas Swift's stout house and thriving homestead were visited by the Parliamentary marauders. Twelve times, so it was said, his flocks were driven off : fifty times his house was plundered from roof-tree to cellar. The Earl of Stamford commanded for the Parliament at Hereford, and, close by, the castle of Goodrich was held by the same party. The Marquis of Worcester held the castle of Raglan, but his presence proved no defence to the vicarage of Goodrich, or to the New House Farm, as the parson's own property was called. Again and again the house was stript. The

supplications of his wife, in the Vicar's absence, were disregarded, and the bread and bed-clothes snatched by Lord Stamford's troopers from his children, who were preserved from starvation only by the hazardous mercy which neighbours dared to show.¹ The wonder was that after all their hardships, anything was left to the Swift family : and the indomitable recuperative power of the Vicar earned for him the name of the "conjurer," amongst the simple country folk. He could catch and hurl back bullets, he had struggled with the foul fiend, he was proof against any natural or supernatural foe. But whether his recovery from plunder so often repeated was due to the Devil, or to his capacious cellars, he still held out : and even in 1645, when all was lost in the battle of Naseby, he carried to Lord Worcester at Raglan Castle, his waistcoat quilted with 300 broad pieces, as an offering to the King. His spirit never failed him throughout the struggle : his livings were sequestered :² his

¹ The account in the Dean's fragment of autobiography is taken from the *Mercurius Rusticus, or Country's Complaint*, published in 1685. Scott has printed the passage (vol. i. p. 504). In a transcript preserved in Lord Cork's papers, there are some notes, written, as I presume, by Mr. Deane Swift, of which the following have some interest. The captain Kirle, who attacked the Vicar's house, was, it appears, a kinsman of Kirle or Kyrle, Pope's Man of Ross. The other note is one on the passage in which *Mercurius Rusticus* describes the cruelties inflicted on the Vicar's children. "The Dean's father in particular," says the note, "was swung against the wall, and the violence of the blow laid him for dead upon the floor. He was then two years old ; he was all his life subject to a giddiness, and so in like manner were the Dean and his sister. It was supposed the disorder was owing to this accident." This new origin for the Dean's malady is probably due only to Mr. Deane Swift's fertile imagination.

² Goodrich and Bristow. That of Goodrich was, in 1646, assigned to his brother-in-law, the Rev. Jonathan Dryden.

farm was seized: he was reduced to utter poverty: but he still kept his loyalty as a servant of the Church militant in more senses than one. To him was ascribed the destruction of two hundred out of a troop of three hundred rebels, who, in crossing a stream, dashed themselves and their horses on the spikes of a hidden machine which the Vicar had previously contrived. Clearly the Committee of Hereford had some grounds for thinking that from their point of view this Vicar of Goodrich was a dangerous and scandalous delinquent, whose livings were not only to be sequestrated, but his person secured. He was imprisoned, but the close of the war brought him liberty. Once more, he set himself to "repair his rafts" of private property: but he died two years before the Restoration might have brought him more ample redress.

This doughty Vicar died in 1658, and was buried underneath the altar of the church of which he had been vicar, and near which stood his battered house.¹ Of the broken and impoverished family, five sons went to seek their fortunes in Ireland. For the eldest, Godwin, at least, the indomitable Vicar had managed to secure a regular legal training: and he,

¹ The only memorials of the family now in the church are the entries of the births of the Vicar's sons and daughters, and the chalice once carried by the Vicar for the administration of the Holy Communion to the sick, and afterwards presented by the Dean to the parish church. The Latin inscription runs thus: "THOMAS SWIFT HUIUS ECCLESIAE RECTOR, NOTUS IN HISTORIIS OB EA QUAE FECIT ET PASSUS EST PRO CAROLO PRIMO, EX HOC CALICE AEGROTANTIBUS PROPINAVIT. EUNM CALICEM JONATH: SWIFT S.T.D. DECAN. SANCTI PATRICII, DUBLIN, THOMAE EX FILIO NEPOS, HUIC ECCLESIAE IN PERPETUUM DEDICAT. 1726."

after qualifying at Gray's Inn, came over to find in Ireland, then only slowly settling down after a series of convulsions, a field where legal knowledge was scarce, and yet much in demand.¹ The law courts were overwhelmed with pleas arising from the doubts in which repeated grants and revocations had involved all landed property. Godwin Swift's success was rapid. He lost no means of rising. His first wife was a kinswoman of the Marchioness of Ormond: and though even before the Restoration this wife was dead, the connexion gained for her husband, already re-married, the office of Attorney-General of the Palatinate of Tipperary from the first Duke of Ormond. Of four wives, three brought him dowries: and one was drawn from a family so hostile to his traditional politics as that of Admiral Deane the regicide. His wealth increased, it is said, until at one time it reached as much as £3000 a year.² Allowing a wide margin for the exaggeration of report, there yet remains enough, considering the value of money then and now, to prove that Godwin Swift was amongst the wealthiest citizens of Dublin, and one whose poor relations would find in poverty an added sting by contrast.

Other brothers³ followed him to Ireland: and

¹ Deane Swift's *Essay*, p. 16.

² The authority is the apocryphal one of his grandson, Deane Swift.

³ The second son, Thomas Swift, stayed in England, married Sir William Davenant's daughter, and was father of the Thomas Swift, afterwards Rector of Puttenham in Surrey, who brought on himself the sarcasm of his greater kinsman by laying claim to the authorship of the *Tule of a Tub*.

amongst them that "seventh or eighth" son, Jonathan, whose career seems to have been as unlucky as the circumstances in which he first saw the light. He had come to Ireland, a lad of eighteen, on his father's death. He had lived on such casual employments about the courts as his brother's influence could obtain for him. Before he had secured any sure income, and while he could settle on his wife no more than £20 a year, he did as penniless younger brothers will do, to the reasonable disgust of their more prudent and well-to-do elders. He married Abigail Erick, the dowerless daughter of an old Leicestershire house, which claimed descent from that Eadric the Forester, who long defied the Norman rule. In 1665, Jonathan secured the appointment of Steward of the King's Inns, Dublin: and perhaps the prospect for the young couple, when prosperity was rapidly swelling the elder brother's store, seemed, for the moment, fair enough. But first a daughter, of whose lot we shall hear more, was born: and then, in the spring of 1667, while another child was expected, Jonathan Swift suddenly left his young wife a widow, to battle as best she might with the hardships that fall to a poor relation. Her time of early widowhood was occupied with petitioning the benchers to forgive her a debt of some twelve pounds due by her late husband, and to aid her in procuring arrears amounting to a hundred pounds,¹ due to her. She had full need of all that blitheness of heart which we

¹ Scott has quoted these facts from Duhigg's *History of the King's Inns, Dublin*.

know to have been hers, during these months that preceded the birth of her son, JONATHAN SWIFT, on the 30th of November, 1667.

Swift's birth took place at a house in Hoey's Court, a narrow and now squalid entry close by the Castle grounds, and within a few minutes' walk of the Cathedral of which he was afterwards Dean. The court is now dirty and mean-looking : but the situation was then one of the best in Dublin, and the houses, though conveniently close to the principal street, were approached only by sedan chairs, and thus relieved from the noise of the thoroughfare. The street close by (St. Werburg Street), was the busy street of Dublin, and had often seen, in the generation before Swift's birth, the mustering of trained bands, and the march of armed men. The houses in Hoey's Court, mean as they now are, yet retain some faint impression of their former fashion : and No. 7, in which Swift was born, which has been pulled down and the site enclosed in the Castle grounds, is still remembered by the older inhabitants as one of the largest in the court. In proportion to his reputed wealth, Godwin Swift may have ministered but grudgingly to his sister-in-law's wants ; but she was not then living in any humble or poverty-stricken quarter of the town. His own house, like those of most of the wealthier lawyers, was close by in Chancery Lane or Bride Street. Swift's mother was not too poor to have had in her service a nurse, whose relations, at least, were English, and with whom is connected the first strange story of Swift's life. As the story is told us by Swift

himself, this nurse became so attached to her charge, that having occasion to visit a dying relation at Whitehaven, she carried with her secretly the infant of a year old, and kept him with her for more than three years. The mother, pressed by poverty and ill at ease, may have been content, for a time, to relinquish her child to one who had cared for it so well. But however that may be, and unlikely as the story seems, no doubt has been thrown on it: and it was to this residence at Whitehaven that Swift's earliest recollections belonged. Faint enough they must have been, but they were cherished with an obstinacy that is characteristic of the man. We are told by one¹ who knew him in his later years, that he retained his affection for Whitehaven to the last, with a partiality which must have fed itself on imagination more than on memory; even as late as 1739, when he was on the eve of that darkest passage that awaited him before death, he invited to dinner a merchant of Whitehaven, who with his son and daughter happened to pass through Dublin. Before he returned to Ireland he had learned to spell, and even to read any chapter of the Bible; and upon these early years in England he afterwards dwelt with pleasure, as serving, along with his English descent, to redeem him from what he considered the disgrace of having to own any Irish nationality.

Swift was brought back to Ireland in his fourth year: but was left with his mother only for a short time. Their chief dependence was on the charity of

¹ MS. notes by Dr. Lyons to Hawkesworth's Life.

his uncle Godwin, and for that uncle Swift retained no very warm feeling. He was reckoned "a little too dextrous in the subtle parts of the law," says Swift, in the autobiography. Besides this, Godwin Swift was beginning to lose by foolish speculations the money he had gained by his successful practice. Whether inability or avarice was the cause, Swift seems to have found that the charity of his uncle was grudgingly bestowed: and once the thought had suggested itself to him, he was scarcely of a mood to suffer it to rest either forgotten or forgiven. At the age of six he was sent by his uncle to the grammar school of Kilkenny, then, as it is still, under the patronage of the Ormond family, and only a few miles from the family house of Swiftsheath. The teacher of the school, which held a high reputation at the time, was a Mr. Ryder: and under his charge Swift remained till the age of fourteen. Long after his death there was to be seen in the old schoolroom, now replaced by a more modern building, his name cut in the desk with his penknife.¹ Of the life of the schoolboy we know but little, and that little only from his own casual reminiscences. Here it was that the dog-Latin verses by which a knowledge of classical concords was acquired, suggested to him those jingling rhymes that in later years he reproduced in his Latin-English escapades with Sheridan and Delany. Here, too, was the scene of a boyish prank, recalled by himself, in which he purchased for all he had in the world, a "mangy" horse that was on its

¹ MS. notes by Dr. Lyons on Hawkesworth's Life.

way to the knackers' yard, and rejoiced in the proud dignity of an owner until the poor brute presently fell dead at his feet.¹ Kilkenny itself, in the old cathedral of St. Canice, the remnants of the Black Abbey, and above all the great castle of the Ormonds, had much that must have vividly impressed the boy's mind. But the strangest thing about the town was the double corporation with separate jurisdiction. Divided by the stream which runs through the centre, the Roman Catholic and Protestant populations lived apart. The endless bickerings of the two have obtained a proverbial immortality in the fable of the Kilkenny cats: and in those bickerings, familiar to his boyhood, Swift was thus early inured to the baneful animosities that were eating into the life of the country. Of his school-fellows we know something. Amongst them was his cousin Thomas Swift, the son of that uncle who had gained a quiet settlement in England as a clergyman before the death of the sturdy Vicar of Goodrich; a youth named Stratford, who passed to the city of London, and of whose commercial vicissitudes we hear something in Swift's later journals;² and above all William Congreve, whose genius he admired, in whose fame he took delight, and whose friendship he continued to enjoy, long after politics had done their best to separate the old schoolfellows. But a few casual

¹ Sheridan's *Life*, p. 402.

² See the *Journal to Stella*, *passim*. Swift at first rather envies Stratford's successes: but soon finds reason rather to pity him. He became bankrupt in the spring of 1712, nearly involving Swift's savings in his own ruin.

glimpses are all we have of these years so critical for Swift's later career, while the young orphan, cut off from the mother who was the one bright influence in his life, was fretting out his heart, and doubtless magnifying his misfortunes, under the hated rule of an uncle whom he knew to be grasping and worldly, and fancied, reasonably or not, to be grudging in his charity.

Swift was fourteen when he left Kilkenny school for Trinity College, where he was entered as a pensioner, along with that cousin just named, Thomas Swift of Oxfordshire. The memory of his uncle Godwin's charity, in connexion with these college days, remained to Swift as an experience even more galling than that of the help given him in his boyhood. To the gloom that it bred in him he ascribed, writing more than forty years afterwards, the poor use that he then made of his time. "By the ill-treatment of his nearest relations," he says, "he was so discouraged and sunk in his spirits, that he too much neglected his academic studies, for some parts of which he had no great relish by nature; so that when the time came for taking his degree as Bachelor of Arts, although he lived with great regularity and due observance of the statutes, he was stopped of his degree for dulness and insufficiency; and at last hardly admitted, in a manner little to his credit, which is called in that College, *speciali gratiâ*." ¹

This gives us a picture, clear and simple enough, of the young student, anxious to make his way by

¹ Autobiographical Anecdotes.

regularity, industry, and effort, but cumbered by the gloom of his position, and still more by the burden of a genius that had not yet learnt to know, or to guide, itself. Had these words stood alone, no more need have been said ; but his own reminiscences have been surrounded by a cloud of exaggeration.

In Swift's own words, it is plain, there is nothing either of extravagant self-depreciation, or of indignant censure of the system under which these student days were led. He neither slurs over the discredit, such as it was, nor makes it matter of undue regret. He explains it, as the result, partly of his own natural inclination, partly of the gloomy circumstances in which he was placed ; but he is careful to accuse himself neither of arrogance nor of misconduct. That his reading was at this time desultory is only what we might have ourselves divined. Swift's was not a mind which would readily find contentment in the fixed studies of any ordained curriculum. The difficulties that occur in regard to his college career, however, arise from the glosses of later authorities. Delany, whose testimony is the best of all, tells us that Swift was wont to speak of himself in his college days as a "dunce," who believed "poetry, plays, and novels, to be the only polite accomplishments." This is clearly nothing but the colloquial version, with humorous exaggeration, of what the autobiography states with more reserve. But Lord Orrery adds some further detail of exaggeration to the account. Not only was Swift, according to him, rejected for insufficiency, and finally the recipient of a dishonour-

able degree; but he spent his time in ridicule of the college studies, and, when admitted to the same degree at Oxford, allowed the authorities there to rest in the belief that the *specialis gratiâ* was a mark, not of discredit, but of special honour. Deane Swift, who had been Lord Orrery's authority,¹ maintains that Swift's failure was due, not to carelessness or misdirected reading, but to positive stupidity; that he had worked, but worked without success. Sheridan adds to the story a mass of circumstantial embellishments. "Scholars," says Sheridan, "thought him a dunce;" but Swift, disgusted with the forms of the schools, persisted in arguing after his own manner, while the proctor sat by to put his arguments into scholastic form. Sheridan professes even to have been told by Swift the very questions dealt with, and the very arguments employed.²

The story gained in bulk at every stage. Samuel Richardson, in a published letter, started the novel idea that Swift was even expelled from the college on account of the licence of an attack which he made upon the authorities in the character of *terræ filius*; and Dr. Barrett, of Trinity College, in his Essay on Swift's Early Days, spent much labour in the fruitless effort to complete the identification of Swift with the offending satirist.

¹ The story of the misrepresentation at Oxford, thus depending solely on Deane Swift's evidence, and contradicted by the absence of the words *speciali gratiâ* from the *testimonium* granted by Trinity College to Swift, may safely be rejected.

² It is on this whimsical story that M. Taine has based the first touches in his consistently lurid picture of Swift.

Setting aside this last story, as a baseless fancy, it is easy to see how the other exaggerations have arisen. It is not impossible that Swift may have spoken at times with much bitterness of his early failure, and that he may have repelled the attempt by Deane Swift, or any one else, to find in that failure a symptom of dawning genius. Men whose consciousness of power requires no accidental confirmation, are not generally inclined to accept flattering explanations of their own youthful peculiarities. Swift may have met such attempts by asserting, even more positively than in the autobiography, that he was not idle, but unmistakably dull.¹ It is fortunate, however, that Mr. Forster's care has preserved for us a document which, taken with Swift's own words, brings us back to the plain facts of the case. This is the copy of a college roll of Easter Term, 1685, containing the results of the terminal examination which preceded the degree of February, 168⁶₅, in which Swift's name appears. The subjects of examination are arranged in three heads,² and are marked in the roll thus: *Ph.*

¹ Mr. Forster, who seems to set aside the evidence of Lord Orrery and Deane Swift on this point, as well as in regard to Swift's representation to the Oxford authorities, has omitted to notice that there is better authority for the story than either. It is told also by Mrs. Pilkington who, worthless as she was, tells us much that is indubitably true about Swift. "When I heard the Dean relate this circumstance (that he had been stopped of his degree as a dunce), for I set down nothing but what I had from his own mouth, I told him, I supposed he had been idle: but he affirmed to the contrary: assuring me, he was really dull, which, if true, is very surprising."—*Memoirs of Mrs. Pilkington*, vol. i. p. 69 (Dublin, 1748).

² Mr. Forster, as has been explained to me by the authorities of Trinity College, has made a slight mistake in the interpretation

(or Physics), *G. L.* (or Greek and Latin), and *Th.* (or Thema).¹ In the first of these, Swift did "*mule*," in the second he did "*bene*," and in the third, "*negligenter*." This very fairly corresponds with his own account of the points of failure in his college career. But it further explains the disputed words, *speciali gratiâ*.² The degree was obtained, not by examination, but by a scholastic disputation: an essential preliminary to this disputation being that a candidate should have completed a certain number of terms, and passed the usual terminal examinations in each. On the result of the examination, as given in the Roll, where he was defective in two out of three subjects, Swift could not have passed the terminal examination for Easter, 1685: he would therefore lose one of the twelve terms necessary before he could be admitted to the disputation. Strictly, his graduation might have been postponed for a year: but in Swift's time, it was usual to grant a *specialis gratiâ* to meet such cases, for which a supplemental examination appears, shortly after Swift's time, to have been permitted.³ This disposes very simply of the lurid

of the College symbols: *Th.* standing not for *Theology*, as he supposed, but for the *Thema*, or Latin Essay, which each student was expected to produce.

¹ The facsimile of the roll is given in Mr. Forster's *Life of Swift*, p. 38.

² For this explanation, which did not occur to Mr. Forster, I am indebted to a note in Dr. Salmon's volume, *Non-Miraculous Christianity*, p. 224 (1881).

³ Dr. Salmon adds: "The evidence, then, would lead us to think of Swift not as an idle undergraduate, but as one who confined his studies to subjects which interested himself, neglecting some parts of the prescribed curriculum. His shortcomings were not very great, and were treated with every indulgence: and no

picture drawn by one biographer after another, of Swift's erratic and rebellious self-assertion; and shows him only as a youth, chafing at his own position, seeking to discover his own bent, and yet regretting the loss of any chances of independence which his college career might have brought. That he was no idle and reckless rebel against authority is sufficiently proved by his life-long friendship for Dr. St. George Ashe, the tutor of the college under whose care he was placed.¹

To understand Swift's feeling, we must remember, on the one hand, that he belonged to a rich and well-to-do family, but that, on the other, he held the position therein, perhaps in great measure hidden from the world, and not on that account the less irksome, of a poor relation. Outwardly he had the same education as his cousins. But he felt that the education was grudgingly bestowed, and doubtless exaggerated to himself, as most men so placed would naturally do, the degradation of the position. Angry and discontented, he cared little to look into the future, to forecast his power of achieving independ-

doubt, if he had been an idle man, it would not have hurt his pride so much as it would seem it did, that any indulgence should have been necessary."

¹ There is a curious reminiscence of Swift's college days by one who was amongst his bitterest foes in later life, and who could find no very damning accusation to bring against these early years. It is to be found in Burdy's *Life of Skelton* (*Works*, I. xx.), where Dr. Baldwin, the violent Whig provost of the college in Swift's old age, is spoken of. "He had an utter aversion to Dean Swift, because he was a Tory, and used to say scornfully of him, that he was remarkable for nothing else, while in the college, except for making a good fire. He would not allow his college-woman, he said, to do it, but took that trouble on himself."

ence, or even to set himself, with any steadfastness of purpose, to achieve that independence by definite means. He had not learned to conquer difficulties by patient self-control, but brooded over them, varying the brooding, in these early days, by occasional outbursts of fiery and spasmodic, rather than vigorous, self-assertion.

After his bachelor's degree, Swift had set himself with much earnestness of purpose to systematic reading. Even thus early he had a good acquaintance with the classics, and already it would seem had begun the study of the new school of French literature. There is a story, which depends, however, only on the evidence of Deane Swift, that the *Tale of a Tub* was seen in its original form during these College days by a fellow-student of the name of Waring. But the story carries its own contradiction, and is no doubt a mistake arising from the fact that Waring, after the year when we know the *Tale* was written (1696), had abundant opportunities of meeting Swift at Belfast, and may then have seen the book. There is no sign in Swift of precocity of genius ; and for the present, at twenty years of age, it was enough that he should acquire, without attempting to produce. But before his Master's degree was obtained, Swift's reading was abruptly stopped. The resources to which he had hitherto trusted, became less certain and finally altogether failed.

Godwin Swift, wealthy as he had been, was now a poor, almost an insolvent, man. His sternness to his nephew, or what the nephew interpreted as sternness,

had perhaps not a little to excuse it. As one enterprise after another failed, the store of money dwindled; his nerves were shattered; ultimately, what may, to some extent, have been a family scourge of insanity, fell on him, and his mind gave way. His death soon followed, in 1688.

But Swift had other relations, for whom he retained a sincere attachment. To his uncle William, he afterwards recalls the early favours he received from him, whom he calls "the best of his relations."¹ His uncle Adam gave him prudent advice as to a love episode of his younger years.² To his cousins Willoughby and Deane Swift,³ the sons of Godwin, who settled in Lisbon as merchants, he had, as it appears, the most friendly feelings. By their kindness, the lack of supplies did not operate very suddenly after his uncle Godwin's death.

Swift, according to Deane Swift,⁴ was once gazing from his window in the college quadrangle, brooding over his own straits, when he saw a master-mariner wandering about the court, and looking for some particular door. After some delay, the sailor turned to Swift's own chamber: asked his name, and announced that his errand was then and there to hand

¹ See Deane Swift's *Essay*, p. 56. The expression occurs in a letter from Swift at Moor Park, to his uncle, dated Nov. 29, 1692.

² "My uncle Adam asked me one day in private, as by direction, what my designs were in relation to you."—*Swift to Miss Jane Waring*, May 4, 1700.

³ Letter to Deane Swift (the elder), June 3rd, 1694.

⁴ Who tells it on the authority of Mrs. Swanson, the daughter of Willoughby Swift, to whom a characteristic letter, the MS. of which is in Trinity College library, was written long after by the Dean.

over a sum of money sent by the cousin in Lisbon. Swift would fain have rewarded the man for the conscientious performance of his commission : but all reward was refused, and Swift valued the new gift too keenly to repeat the offer. From that time dated, according to Swift himself, the rigid accuracy of his economy. The half-extravagant youth, grumbling at the source of his subsistence, but unwilling to restrict its cost, now learned a new lesson of thrift, and resolved that this gift, as it was the most welcome, should also be the last. Henceforward he stood on his own feet.

No one more earnestly desired to win for himself place and power than Swift now did ; no one had greater resources with which to win them ; yet few lacked more entirely that mental discipline which might guide, and regulate, and effectively apply, these resources. But if he hesitated, events soon came which forced him to break with Ireland. The Revolution gave the signal for anarchy to be again let loose in Ireland under Tyrconnel, only to end in a fierce civil war, setting ablaze all those hatreds of race and religion which had been smouldering since 1641. It was another of those disturbances of which the youthful University of Queen Elizabeth had, in its less than a century of life, seen so many. Money or no money, Swift was forced to seek his fortune elsewhere. Driven by stress of circumstances from Dublin, he went to England, and first sought his mother's home in Leicester. Tenderly as he loved her, their long parting, and the lack of her sympathy and care, had

been the most bitter aggravation of all the discontent of these early years; and now he could hardly come to her with much hope. He was ambitious, but he had no clear views as to his own future. He was unprepared to submit to the discipline of routine. His experience as a youth had been the worst a man can have—that of the poor relation subsisting on the fortuitous alms of his richer kinsmen. The impression had burned itself in on his memory, and the seared spot remained. He had received from his uncle, as he said long after, “the education of a dog.” To unsympathetic ears, there may still be something in the retort, “that with the ingratitude of a dog he repaid it.” But, without sympathy, few passages of Swift’s life are fairly to be judged.

Such was Swift when, at the age of one and twenty, he again met his mother, whom he had seen only at rare intervals during more than fifteen years. We are not without means of judging what manner of woman this mother was. Slight, comparatively, as is the place she holds in Swift’s biography, hers was clearly a character likely to leave its impress on her son. From Deane Swift, we learn, perhaps on the authority of Swift’s own reminiscences, some traits of her simple and orderly life, of her quiet tastes and of her unobtrusive cheerfulness.¹ But she was not with-

¹ “She was very exact in all the duties of religion. . . . A very early riser, and always dressed for the whole day at about six o’clock in the morning, in a mantua and petticoat, which according to the fashion of those times she constantly wore. . . . Her chief amusements needlework and reading. . . . A woman of an easy, contented spirit.”—Deane Swift’s *Essay*, p. 23.

out something of her son's wayward humour, breaking out at times in a manner more characteristic than decorous. On one of her visits to Dublin she lodged in the house of Mrs. Brent in George's Lane.¹ Her landlady was scandalised one day by being asked "whether she could keep a secret?" In utmost confidence she was then told that her lodger had a gallant in the town, who would presently come to pay his addresses. But no one was to know the secret. The gallant soon came; was admitted with due mystery; and in this character, so full of bewildering interest for poor Mrs. Brent, Swift continued for some time to visit his mother.²

In later years we shall hear more of Mrs. Swift; and as long as her life lasted Swift's affection for her never failed. His visits to Leicester were frequent; and much as he disliked the meddlesome gossip of the provincial town,³ he retained, for her sake, some attachment to the place. They met now at a most critical period of his life, while his powers were still in fusion, while his mind was restlessly demanding employment, and when, as he tells us, "a person of great honour in Ireland (who was pleased to stoop so low as to look into my mind) used to tell me that my mind was like a conjured spirit, that would do

¹ Dr. Lyons tells the story on Swift's own authority.

² Mrs. Brent's sufferings under these vagaries were rewarded in later years by her appointment as Swift's "Walpole," the title she bore as his housekeeper. Her daughter, Mrs. Ridgeway, succeeded her in office.

³ "The people is a lying sort of a beast (and I think in Leicester above all parts that ever I was in)."—*Swift to the Rev. John Kendall*, Feb. 11, 1692.

mischieif if I would not give it employment.”¹ The mischief now consisted only of flirtations which made his mother uneasy, though they were no more than thoughtless pastimes for her son. But after those few months, the eagerness to go farther afield grew stronger. His mother’s slender resources could not suffice for two : and Swift was too wise to allow, in early manhood, the renewal of those ties of dependence on well-to-do relations, which had tried him so hardly even in youth. It was time for him to seek an opening into some wider career.

The choice he made was one suggested by his mother. Being related to the wife of Sir William Temple, she had some claim upon his aid ; and Temple’s family had some associations with the Swift family in Ireland.² Application was made to Temple for employment, and met with a ready response. Before the close of 1689, Swift had quitted Leicester to enter on an engagement with Sir William Temple, at Sheen. He had now before him a new experience ; that of dependence, half-menial and half-confidential, on the bounty of a stranger, as hard, in its own way, to stomach as dependence on the grudging charity of a kinsman. About the terms, the duration, and the nature of this employment, much unnecessary controversy has arisen.

¹ This occurs in the letter to Mr. Kendall (Feb. 11, 1692 $\frac{1}{2}$). The person of honour has been identified with Lord Berkeley, but on no grounds that are even plausible.

² There seems to have been a considerable intimacy between Godwin Swift and Sir John Temple, the father of Sir William, though not so close, probably, as Deane Swift seeks to make out. — *Essay*, p. 33.

Sir William Temple, on retiring from public life in 1680, had gone to live at Sheen, near Richmond. After a time, anxious to secure still further quiet, he had bought an estate near Farnham, forty miles from town, amidst the furze and heather of a wide tract of Surrey common. Here he retired in November, 1686: built a house, and occupied his time in the laying out of his garden and ground, after the fashion he had learned during his embassies in Holland. When the troubles of 1688 broke out, Temple returned for a time to the house at Sheen, which he had abandoned to his son. Here he stayed for some eventful months. At first he forbore to give any active assistance to the Prince, long as he had been his friend. For a time he even refused to allow his son to join the invading army. But presently, either his scruples were overcome, or his doubts as to the success of the Prince were removed. His son joined the Prince, and undertook for him some very delicate negotiations in Ireland. But the business miscarried, and despair led young Temple to take his own life in April, 1689. For a while longer Sir William Temple stayed at Sheen, where his presence was needed to arrange his son's affairs.

But he was anxious to get away. He looked upon Sheen as a merely temporary abode; and recent associations would not tend to reconcile him to it. Before the close of 1689 he had returned to his favourite retreat of Moor Park.

The house at Moor Park still remains. It was a roomy, even a luxurious house, nestling, after the

fashion and taste of the day, at the foot of tree-clad ridges, which rise abruptly from the sweep made by the drive in front of the entrance to the house. Over the door there still remains the Temple coat of arms, marking that dignity which the owner of the mansion never allowed himself to forget. Behind lie the well-ordered gardens and the trim canal, still preserving something of the Dutch taste which guided Temple, recalling as it did the scenes of his diplomatic triumphs, and at the same time appealing to the sympathies of his king. Across the garden and the trim canal, with its fish-pond at the foot, there opens the view of Crooksbury Hill and the heathery commons near it. Two centuries have not weakened the impression of trim and orderly dignity and prosperity which hangs about the house, placed amid scenes which had all the quiet, but none of the gloom, of the dreary tracts of green land that Swift had known about Kilkenny. Close by were the ruins of Waverley Abbey, beautiful even in decay. Two miles off, in the opposite direction, lay the thriving old town of Farnham, overhung by Farnham Castle, the pride of English episcopal residences, and of all things most likely to impress a stranger, young and fresh from Ireland, as an outward type of the dignity and calm of the English Church. A few minutes' walk from the house is Mother Ludlam's cave, the scene of stories well known to Surrey traditions. Much as Temple's house might be the resort of visitors, a few minutes' walk in any direction could bury the student in the wildest and loneliest of woods and commons.

To this scene it was that Swift came, with his new patron, from Sheen. He is not himself very clear as to this first residence with Temple, and we have now and then to balance some trifling discrepancies in the accounts. But they are no more serious or more important than would occur in the hurried reminiscences of any man, writing of the details of his youth when he had reached mature age. He tells us in the autobiographical fragment, that Temple, before Swift joined him, had "retired to Moor Park." This is scarcely consistent with the view that Swift came with Temple from Sheen to Moor Park, as he himself says he did only a few lines below. Temple had already retired to Moor Park, in the sense that he had already chosen it for his fixed abode: Swift joined him there, went with him to Sheen, and afterwards accompanied him there from Sheen, not on his first removal to the new abode, but on his return after the emergencies which had forced him back for a time to Sheen were over.

At Sheen, King William had frequently visited his friend Temple: and there Swift may first have seen him. But Swift's position at first in Temple's household was clearly a very humble one. He read to, and wrote for, his patron, kept the accounts, and made himself useful as a sort of superior valet. It is scarcely likely that while thus employed he came in any way under the notice of the King, as we know that eventually he did. During Temple's illness, when he could not move from the house, the King was accompanied by Swift in walks round Temple's

garden. We may safely place the locality of the story at Moor Park ; and the King, as we know from Lady Giffard, Temple's widowed sister and biographer, did visit Moor Park at least on one occasion as he drove from Winchester to town.¹ We need not then suppose that it was during Swift's earlier days with Sir William at Sheen, while he was still the awkward and unfledged student, uncertain of his own powers, impressed with his own inexperience, and filling an irksome post halfway between a servant and a clerk, that the King chose to single him out for notice : but we may, quite as consistently with the evidence, and with far more probability, conceive that notice to have been bestowed in the later days of the Moor Park residence, when Temple had learned Swift's worth, when he leant upon his help, and when Swift had been able, as he could long afterwards boast, to prove himself not quite useless for higher duties.²

Temple, into whose service Swift now entered, although no heroic character, was a good specimen of his time. He was honourable and of strict integrity, but with some lack of zeal ; with high and even romantic ideas of the past, but able to see with cold

¹ In the short Life which Lady Giffard prefixed to her brother's works, she says, speaking clearly of the period after his second retirement to Moor Park, "that he had the honour of a visit from the King on his way from Winchester, and used to wait upon him at Richmond and Windsor." An old painting, of which there is now a copy at Moor Park, shows the arrival of the King and his suite at the house : and confirms, if any confirmation is needed, the fact that it was here, and not, as has generally been assumed, at Sheen, that Swift's acquaintance with the King began. Nor did Temple's illness confine him much to the house till about 1693.

² *Swift to Lord Palmerston*, Jan. 29, 1729.

and unbiassed reason the advantages of the present, and unwilling to make many personal sacrifices for any conviction: employed in important transactions, but playing in them the part rather of a shrewd adviser and an upright and diligent agent, than of a director or originator: no abettor of the worst schemes of ministers, but on friendly terms with those avowedly responsible for these schemes. He never forgot what was due to his own sense of honour. He was nice in his adherence to truth and delicate in avoiding any wrongful gains when these, apparently, were within his reach. Nor need we conceive of him as a man of cold exterior or repulsive austerity. On the contrary his temper was warm, though kept well under restraint. He was self-indulgent by nature, and loved to give pleasure to those around him, from a certain ease and inclination of humour. He had no wish to force either himself or others to the observance of any very severe code of manners or of morals. His studies were those of the dilettante rather than of the student; but he had a ready interest in many things, if not a very absorbing interest in any. On the other hand, Sir William had about him some very petty traits. He was fitful and capricious in his humours, however philosophically he might write. He cared nothing for dishonest gains, but he seems to have looked very closely after those that were rightly his. Easy by nature, his overpowering self-conceit led him to adopt a pompous manner, and to talk perhaps as he has written, at undue length, on his own achievements. Some odd stories are told of his habitual

conceit : and in the case of one, the fact that it is given on the authority of Arbuthnot, might suggest that it owed its first recital, it may be a mischievously-inclined recital, to Arbuthnot's friend, and Temple's former dependant, Swift. Vexed at finding each of the collections which he was showing to Temple thrown into the shade by some superior possession of his own, on whose merits Temple dwelt, Lord Brouneker, we are told, at length very gravely replied : "Sir William, say no more of the matter : you must at length yield to me, I having lately got something which it is impossible for you to obtain, for my Welsh steward has sent to me a flock of geese : and these are what you can never have, since all your geese are swans."

Of the other inmates of the house, Lady Temple, the story of whose early days as Dorothy Osborne has in it much of romance, would naturally feel some interest in the youth, brought into her husband's employment as a poor kinsman of her own. She lived for five years more, but her place, as mistress of Moor Park, was in a great measure usurped by Lady Giffard, Temple's widowed sister, who, to a disposition as ardent as his, joined less of self-control : and, in spite of the ability that made her no contemptible defender of his fame, had faults of temper which finally caused an entire breach between her and Swift. But for us the chief interest of the circle lies elsewhere. It is in an adjunct of the household, formed of a Mrs. Johnson, widow of a confidential servant of Sir William's, and her two little daughters. The

elder of these daughters was Esther Johnson, now in her eighth year, whose name was to be linked, in one of the strangest and yet tenderest episodes in the often strange and often tender annals of literary history, with that of the student outwardly so humble, but whose genius opened itself perhaps more quickly to this child than to any others of the circle amidst which he now moved. The position of the Johnson family seems to have been a doubtful one, in the household : at times admitted by the leniency of Lady Giffard to be inmates of Moor Park, and at other times, as tradition has it, living in a little cottage on the confines of the property, which has transmitted to the modern lodge that has replaced it, the name of "Stella's Cottage." In a household so strangely formed, Swift had opportunities of observing other sides of human nature than those to be seen in the visits of king or courtier, and in the discussion of momentous movements in a nation's history. The small vanities of great men : the little local gossip : the notabilities of Farnham : the humours of the various inmates of the house—all these contributed to that which was even now his chief study, the knowledge of mankind.

This first residence began, as we have seen, towards the close of 1689. He came to it "a raw and inexperienced youth." Swift himself,¹ speaking from memory, and not probably desiring to dwell on details that might have been unpleasant to recall, says loosely that he stayed about two years. The residence, in

¹ Autobiographical Anecdotes.

reality, did not last even a year. Already his life-long enemies, giddiness and deafness, had begun the attacks that were to continue with such persistency; and the advice of physicians gave him an excuse for returning to Ireland to recruit his health. It is clear enough that this earlier residence, deep as was the mark it left on Swift's character, was not very pleasant on either side. Swift had as yet established little hold on Sir William's patronage, and may, from very ignorance and inexperience, or from boyish pride, have attempted to claim a position in the household which neither his master, nor others in the circle, were disposed to admit. Yet neither master nor dependant may have been willing to allow matters to go the length of an open breach, and the opportunity may readily have been seized of an excuse for the temporary return of Swift to Ireland. But the parting had no outward signs of ill-will on either side.

In May, 1690, Swift went back to Ireland with a letter from Temple to his friend Sir Robert Southwell,¹ who had gone to Ireland as Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, in which Temple recommends Swift as an amanuensis, or, if that were possible, as a fellow of Trinity College; and speaks in favourable, if not in warm, terms of Swift's services to himself. Swift's kinsmen are named, if not with the respect that equals might claim, at least not with the contemptuous ignorance which patronage assumes.² Nothing came

¹ The letter was first printed in Cunningham's edition of the *Lives of the Poets* (1854), vol. iii. p. 160.

² He "has good friends," says the letter, "though they have for the present lost their fortunes." The phraseology is curious in

of this recommendation, and Swift's visit to Ireland had opened to him no means of livelihood. But from a statement in one of his letters we learn that he returned to England in the autumn of 1691;¹ that he lived for a time in the country (we may safely assume that it was again with his mother at Leicester); and that after this he returned on a visit to his patron, and settled again in Temple's house about the close of that year. The residence would therefore appear to have been interrupted for about a year and a half; but when renewed, it was on a totally different footing. Each had repented of the breach, and had found the aid of the other more necessary than he supposed. Temple was too shrewd an observer of men, and had been trained in too astute a school, to remain quite ignorant of the powers that lay buried under the uncouth exterior of this "raw and inexperienced youth." Swift, on his side, had not relished the renewal of Irish life after the smooth and polished society of Moor Park, and had found no easy roadway to independence in the country of his education. Hardly had the second residence begun, before he found Temple ready to assist him by giving him the means of rising a step in the academic scale. His

other parts of the letter. "He has Latin and Greek, some French, and writes a very good current hand, is very honest and diligent." As he might recommend a deserving clerk, Temple introduces to Southwell this youth, whose name was to outlive those of all the ex-ambassadors and secretaries of his day.

¹ Mr. Forster places the beginning of this second residence in August, 1690. But I see no reason to set aside the statement in Swift's letter to the Athenian Society, of Feb. 14, 1692 $\frac{2}{3}$, in which he says he "returned from Ireland about six months ago." Scott, xv. p. 255.

Dublin career had been cut short before he had attained the master's degree. But now he found means, with Temple's help, of becoming a graduate of Oxford. Of his residence there, and even how long it continued, we know little ; but it cannot have been long. On the 23rd of May, 1692, he obtained the necessary certificate of his bachelor's degree from Trinity College : on the 14th of June, he was admitted on the same footing at Oxford : and on the 5th of July, he became a Master of Arts.¹

He was now no longer a waif and stray in the battle of life, but renewed his services to Temple with a position in the land of his choice which he prized more than any which could have been given him in the land of his birth and education. "He had been obliged," he says of his Oxford experiences, "in a few weeks to strangers more than in seven years to Dublin College." We have his own account of his new position in Sir William Temple's household in terms that are too clear to admit of dispute, or to be based on imperfect recollection : "growing into some confidence," as he distinctly tells us, "he was often trusted with affairs of great importance."

¹ Swift belonged to Hart Hall, which afterwards developed into Hartford, or Hertford, College. The College was dissolved in 1805, but the name has been revived for Magdalen Hall, as now reconstituted.

CHAPTER II

SWIFT'S FIRST YEARS OF MANHOOD, AND THEIR LESSONS

1692-1696

ÆTAT. 24-28

The second residence with Temple—The influence of Oxford on Swift—His first literary efforts—The Pindarics—*Ode to Archbishop Sancroft*—*To Sir William Temple*—Swift and the Athenian Society—John Dunton—Dryden's criticism of Swift's early attempts—*The Address to William III.*—Swift as adviser of the King—What he learnt at Court—Swift's *Ode to Congreve*—*On Sir W. Temple's Recovery*—Desire for independence—His mental state and his experiences so far—His choice of a career—Ordination—An awkward application—Prebendary of Kilroot—The Irish Church in 1694—His life and companions at Kilroot—Varina—Growing irksomeness of his surroundings—Return to England, and what he brought with him.

WITH this second residence in Temple's house there opens for Swift a wider horizon. Step by step he is being drawn into that arena of busy life which now attracted and again repelled him, for which his impetuous spirit of command so far fitted him, at the same time that his intolerance of convention and discipline prevented his hoping for the success in it that smaller men might make sure of. Coming as it

did when his mind was still unsettled, this new and larger opportunity of watching the inner movements of great affairs, fascinated Swift's imagination. At the quiet house amidst the Surrey wastes of heather he saw the coming and going of the men who were making the history of Europe, could observe their moods, and could measure their capacity. From this early glimpse he may first have acquired what he retained through life, and what so much fed his cynical humour, the sense of the marvellous contrast between the smallness of the men and the vastness of the stake that was in their hands. From the first we see two tendencies at work in him. On the one hand the fixed lines of political opinion, the intricacies of political tactics, the abnegation of individual independence which a public life implied, repelled him : on the other, the prospect of power and influence, the excitement of stirring scenes, inspired him with a longing for the fray. The question must even thus early have occurred to him whether he would seek an entry into this arena, or strive by literature to obtain the social distinction which he confesses was what he desired to achieve. As yet he was all unsettled. Already, so he tells us, he had, during one period of enforced idleness, "writ and burnt and writ again, upon all manner of subjects, more than perhaps any man in England."¹ The struggles of early authorship frequently leave behind them an undue impression of their magnitude : but we may well take it that Swift's ineffective industry in these early days was laborious

¹ *Swift to the Rev. John Kendall*, Feb. 11, 1694.

enough. Short as it was, his stay at Oxford, coming early in this second visit, was not without its permanent effect.

The Oxford that had given refuge to Cowley, that had expelled Locke, that had passed the famous Passive Obedience decree, was still imbued with the same spirit, and had not shifted her bearings amidst the storms of the revolution. With her political attitude Oxford had a special literary taste of her own, as well. The coterie of Christ Church was just then maintaining a somewhat unequal fight against the ponderous broadsides of Bentley, and already its leaning to the Tories was as clearly marked as that of its opponents to the Whigs. Its scholarship was not indeed profound, and was frequently worse than superficial ; but it might, with some reason, claim the merit of elegance. Neither the political nor the literary tone of Oxford could be without effect on Swift. Oxford had been gracious to him ; and the kindness shown him there did much to arouse that underlying sympathy for Tory politics which Swift showed long before he quitted openly the ranks of the Whigs, in which his early connexion with Temple had naturally placed him.

It was at Oxford that Swift is said to have made his first literary effort, in a translation or paraphrase after the current fashion of the day, from one of Horace's odes.¹ It contains nothing beyond the

¹ The 18th Ode of the 2nd Book :

“ Non ebur neque aureum
Mea renidet in domo lacunar,” etc.

ordinary trite moralities usual in a college exercise : but it is worth noticing, perhaps, that, without its being required to represent anything in the original, he makes the poet speak of himself, with the sarcastic reference that such a phrase would naturally imply, as one "unskilled in sneaking arts."

Other efforts accompanied, or followed shortly after this. Swift was caught by a current absurdity of taste. The popularity of Cowley, a popularity so great that even one so widely divergent from him as Milton, named him along with Spenser and Shakespeare as one of the three lights of English poetry, had not waned now after he had lain in his grave for more than twenty years. And strange to say, for the moment, it was not Cowley's more simple pieces which were remembered, but the more extravagant flights which he had attempted in his Pindarics. By a curious freak of judgment he had deemed that the most stately and dignified form of English poetry was a disjointed imitation of that style of Greek poetry, the merits of which are of all others the most difficult for a modern reader to appreciate. But Cowley and his contemporaries not only compelled themselves to appreciate, but trained themselves to imitate. The result was only a travesty of Pindar, that failed to stir one chord of real poetry. But the fashion spread. As Dr. Johnson says, "all the boys and girls caught the pleasing fancy, and they who could do nothing else could write like Pindar." Swift was caught by the fashion, which was then so prevalent in Oxford, that even a Latin poem had been written in accord-

ance with what was believed to be Pindar's chaotic contempt for scansion. Swift's attempt is said to have been suggested by Sir William Temple and his wife : and his efforts in this kind, if they have little literary merit, at least show us something of his intellectual growth. His Pindarics include an address to Archbishop Sancroft, on his refusal of the oaths in 1689 : another to Sir William Temple ; and lastly one to the Athenian Society ; all of which give evidence of wide reading, introduced with an amplitude of allusion that makes their meaning often hard to decipher. But, for all that, they are not without interest. Their form is the pedantic one borrowed from Cowley's school : but, here and there, they have a force that implies rather a reminiscence of Dryden's muse. The ode to Sancroft, addressed to him when he was founding that sect of the Non-jurors, which Swift's maturer wisdom condemned, shows us how high Swift placed that insistence on the Church's privileges which afterwards broke his own alliance with the Whigs. Sancroft's self-inflicted martyrdom might be condemned by the School of politicians amongst whom Swift now moved : it might, at a later day, seem even to him over-strained ; but it nevertheless commanded from him the tribute of admiration due to honesty and principle. Obscure and disordered as it is, the Ode has an occasional literary interest from points of likeness or contrast to his later work. The conceit which represents Sancroft's virtue as brightening even the gloom of popular condemnation, as the evening rays of the sun shine through a

cloud, has something strangely unlike Swift's later manner.

"Why should the Sun, alas ! be proud

To lodge behind a golden cloud ?

Though fringed with evening gold the cloud appears so gay,

'Tis but a low-born vapour kindled by a ray."

But there is something, on the other hand, of his later touch in the simplicity of lines like these :—

"Reformers and physicians differ but in name,

One end in both, and the design the same :

Cordials are in their talk, while all they mean

Is but the patient's death, and—gain."

There is still more, perhaps, of his spirit, in the hope that, through the "peevish knowledge" of the multitude,

"Each line shall stab, shall blast, like daggers and like fire."

The Ode to Temple is interesting, not only as showing Swift's entire and genuine respect for his patron, but for the glimpses it gives us of his early thoughts. Even then, he had found food for satire in watching the conduct of great affairs.

"The wily shafts of state, those juggler's tricks,

Which we call deep designs and politics

(As in a theatre the ignorant fry,

Because the cords escape their eye,

Wonder to see the motions fly) ;

Metinks, when you expose the scene,

Down the ill-organ'd engines fall ;

Off fly the vizards and discover all.

How plain I see through the deceit !

How shallow, and how gross, the cheat !"

Already he professes to abhor the "lumber of the

schools": already he turns from what he deemed the useless labour of "digging in the leaden mines of philosophy." But a dislike of philosophy which did not at a later day interfere with his marvellous powers of making abstract thought luminous, does not now prevent him from indulging in laboured metaphysical efforts which take refuge in obscurity.

The last of these Pindaric odes was written for the approval of the newly-started Athenian Society—a pedantic gathering, with exalted aims in social science, which experience taught Swift, like the rest of the world, to laugh at, but to which youthful enthusiasm and want of judgment led him, in 1692, to pay the current homage. John Dunton, with whom originated this scheme of an Athenian Society for the encouragement of universal learning, was a clever, wayward, and half-mad publisher, whose literary schemes or scribblings turn up at various corners from the Revolution to the close of the reign of George I. Bound apprentice to a bookseller, he first pushed himself into a little notoriety as a leader of the Whig apprentice boys at the close of the reign of Charles II. In 1684 he set up as a bookseller himself, and his connexion with the Dissenters gave a sanctimonious colouring to many of his later attempts. He strengthened this religious connexion by a marriage with the daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, the dissenting minister,—another of whose daughters became the mother of John and Charles Wesley. But the break-up of the Whiggish interest after Monmouth's expedition came to an abortive end,

destroyed poor Dunton's credit : and, with his stock of Puritan books and pamphlets, he was forced to start for New England. After some further wandering, he returned to London and opened once more a bookseller's shop, on the very day that William of Orange entered the city. Now began ten years of considerable activity, when a stream of worthless and ephemeral literature, distinguished and attracting only by oddity of title, poured from his press. He attained a little civic dignity : and the "world," as he tells us, "smiled upon him." The main principle of his business as of his life was, "to think or perform something out of the beaten road." One amongst six hundred other schemes which were hatched with feverish rapidity in his addled brain, was this of the Athenian Society, started in 1689. Samuel Wesley, his brother-in-law, seems for a time to have helped him : and to the wheels of such a crazy chariot was it that Swift bound his first literary venture. It is a proof partly of that nervous distrust of himself which Swift always felt : partly of that whimsical judgment as to others by which he was often misled.¹

¹ Dunton's venture closed in 1695 : and afterwards marrying a rich wife, with whom he quarrelled, he left for Dublin to get quit of her : started a bookselling business there, and has left us (what again touches upon Swift's life), one of the most lively accounts of Dublin at the close of the seventeenth century which we possess. He wrangled with Dublin booksellers, persecuted his wife and her mother in print, and busied himself over an account of his *Life and Errors* which he wrote while hiding from his creditors. Coming back to London about 1705 he betook himself to political pamphleteering. In 1710 he published a crazy heroic poem on his Athenian projects, and at the close of Anne's reign we find him one of the Whig writers, and amusingly elevated by a sentence of Swift's satire into a prominence that pleased him,

Swift's own contribution to the motley collection of the Society, hardly merits better company. It is inflated, disordered, often impenetrably obscure, and it abundantly justifies the criticism of the early efforts of Swift which tradition ascribes to Dryden. To his great kinsman, then the dictator of literature, Swift had submitted these efforts, with what we may well believe, from his subsequent sensitiveness, to have been more than usual diffidence. The youthful author of such poems might feel his powers, but in spite of himself, he must have been conscious of their misapplication. He was met by a rebuff, and what is hardest of all to bear, a prophetic rebuff. "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet," said Dryden:¹ and, perhaps all the more because of the truth that there was in the prophecy, it was never forgotten or forgiven. And if Swift was not a poet, he had in store another weapon fully as potent for revenge.

But poor as the piece is, immature as are its thoughts, immersed as it is in that purely wordy metaphysic for which Swift afterwards conceived the most supreme contempt, still it is not without interest. Chiefly, and above all things, it bears in every line the impression of a mind ill at ease with itself and its surroundings, discontented with the anarchy of public taste, and seeking some possible help from an

and insulted the really powerful Whig pens. At a later date, we hear of him attempting to set up a lottery scheme. But his own kinsfolk would have nothing to say to it: and this poor, crazy, but quick-witted, oddity sank into obscurity, perhaps into absolute insanity: and died in 1733.

¹ Johnson gives the story without stating his authority: Warton also gives it, on the authority of Mr. Elijah Fenton.

Academy, even though its ruling spirit should be of texture so mundane as poor Dunton. There is a touch of genuine feeling and something of originality of thought in this outburst, where he describes the unsympathetic and impersonal reward which comes in the shape of posthumous renown :

“Were I to form a regular thought of Fame,
Which is, perhaps, as hard to imagine right
As to paint Echo to the sight,
I would not draw the idea from an empty name ;
Because, alas ! when we all die,
Careless of ignorant posterity,
Although they praise the learning and the wit,
And though the title seems to show
The name and man by whom the book was writ,
Yet how shall they be brought to know,
Whether that very name was *he*, or *you*, or *I* ?”¹

The unsuccessful attempt so evident here, to force words to express a whim or fancy rather than a clear idea, is striking in its very contrast with that which is most characteristic of Swift's later writing, the power of representing even such a fancy without sacrificing absolute clearness, and without admitting anything involved either in word or in thought.

With these Pindarics we may join, as belonging to the same period, an address to William III. on his

¹ There is something here, of contrast as well as of likeness to the passage in the *Tale of a Tub*, where he describes Fame as “a blessing which we mysterious writers can seldom reach, till we have gotten into our graves : whether it is that fame, being a fruit grafted upon the body, can hardly grow and much less ripen till the stock is in the earth : or whether she be a bird of prey, and is lured among the rest to pursue after the scent of a carcase : or, whether she conceives her trumpet sounds best and farthest when she stands on a tomb, by the advantage of a rising ground, and the echo of a hollow vault.”

successes in Ireland, written, probably, to improve the occasion of some passing affability which the King had shown to Swift. It repeats only too faithfully in its involved and hollow panegyric, the style of the Court poet of the Restoration : and shows little more than that Swift was a sound adherent of the Revolution, and retained a vivid remembrance of the Irish ills which had required William's intervention.

In 1692, the possessor of an Oxford degree, and the trusted confidant of Temple, Swift was beginning to take counsel as to his future. He was not to take orders, he says in one of his letters at this time, till the King gave him a prebend :¹ but this very condition implies that his career was so far fixed. Ambition he had in plenty : but he knew, and had already said himself, that two things would thwart that ambition : the "cold temper" that was so apt to chill all his efforts, all his deepest emotions, into cynicism ; and the "unconfined humour," that was to ride roughshod over so many cherished prejudices. Already he had decided that no imprudent act should cause him to enter on the struggle hand-tied, and that no impetuosity of youth should entangle him into giving hostages to fortune, or cumbering himself with responsibilities, which would curb independence. A certain appearance of mental callousness, and a certain severity of self-repression were to be achieved by him : and setting these before him, he chose to call the outside that he presented to the world "a cold temper." The interest of his mental growth lies in

¹ *Swift to Mr. William Swift*, Nov. 29, 1692.

the very process by which he did achieve them : by which the writer of the half-plaintive conceit about the impersonality of posthumous fame, came to be the author, and that only in a very few years' time, of the grave piece of irony in which such posthumous fame is ridiculed either for its love of carrion, or because it loves to sound its trumpet over the echo of a hollow tomb ; in which the youth, straining after metaphysical disquisition, and involving himself in hopeless obscurity, comes to be the derider of philosophy, and the writer of the most rigidly simple prose in our language.

With this process of self-discipline, to which Swift submitted himself, the discipline of life was also widening his experience. Already, as we have seen, he had come into contact with the King. If we may believe the gossip of Deane Swift, William offered him a captaincy of dragoons, and amused himself by teaching the obscure secretary the Dutch way of cutting asparagus, as they walked together in Temple's trim garden at Moor Park. Now Swift was to have a connexion with courts of a more serious sort. It was in the spring of 1693 that William was in grave doubt about the expediency of assenting to the Triennial Bill. Harassed by suspicion, thwarted in the scheme that lay nearest to his heart, William had come to doubt the motives of every suggestion that came from an English Parliament, and from English Ministers. New to English rule, and unable to gauge the real meaning of the Revolution, he clung to that power of veto which was already an anachronism. It

was to Temple that the King turned in his difficulty : pressed to pass the Bill, he sent his Dutch confidant, Lord Portland, to consult Temple on the point. Both the King and Portland, imperfectly acquainted with the events of the Rebellion, had conceived the idea that it was by assenting to a similar Bill that Charles I. had lost his throne and his head. Temple was shrewd enough to see the absolute necessity for the assent being given : and perhaps feared that, whatever the results of the Bill might be, delay was still more dangerous. He did his best with Portland : and doubtful whether such a messenger could represent faithfully views which he himself was too ill personally to lay before the King, he sent his secretary to state his arguments in his stead. For the first time Swift found himself intrusted with an affair of supreme importance. The collision was threatening, and yet the King was blind to the danger. He had to be moved not by warnings, for these might only have stirred his pride, but by suggestions that the Bill was not really any limitation of the prerogative. Swift's historical studies were now called into play, to defend advice, good in itself, but which had to be made palatable to the King on what it is to be feared were false grounds. The mission failed, and the Bill was for the time postponed : but this contact with the Court was the first thing, Swift tells us, "that helped to cure him of vanity."¹ The expres-

¹ The autobiography is the source of the anecdote, at the date of which Swift speaks of himself as under one and twenty. In fact, he was in his six and twentieth year, when the Triennial Bill was before the King.

sion is perhaps purposely ambiguous: but we may take it to mean such vanity as the self-centred broodings of the scholar might create, but the experience of large affairs was likely soon to dissipate.

But apart from occasional contact with the busy world, Swift's chief occupation was still study, his chief ambition still to excel in literature. Leaving Pindarics, from which the stunning criticism of his cousin Dryden had perhaps dissuaded him, Swift still held to serious poetry—still found in poetry, whatever its nominal occasion, a channel for the release of that moodiness of spirit which tormented him. William Congreve, his old schoolfellow at Kilkenny, and companion at Trinity, was now rising into the first rank in literature, and basking in the sunshine of aristocratic Whig patronage. In spite of the brilliant success of his comedies, adverse criticism, prompted, or which friendly judgments might deem to be prompted, by envy and ill-will, had already assailed him: and Swift, still an unknown aspirant, addressed a poem to his old friend and schoolfellow, which though it shook off the form, yet preserved much of the style of thought, of the Pindarics. More striking than any of the previous pictures, is that which it gives of Swift's pent-up spirit, fretting at the confinement of Moor Park, gauging the vanities and vulgarities of the foplings that passed for wits, and scorning their empty artificiality: tracing the typical dunce from "Farnham School" to town, and back again to Farnham with his broken jargon of fashionable witticisms, where he "squandered his

rising talents to the face" of the unknown dullard, Swift: and above all coming ever closer to a measure of his own capacities, and to a forecast of his own future, and of the terrible power he was to wield;

"My hate, whose lash just heaven has long decreed,
Shall on a day make sin and folly bleed."

The praise is well turned and sincere in which he credits Congreve with "a richer vein and cleaner ore" of poetic fancy: but it is also characteristic, that praise of the poet soon gives place to satire of the town and its follies.

A month later, at the close of 1693, we come to the last of these early poems that we possess. It is an ode on Sir William Temple's recovery from illness, as pompous and insincere as such outbursts generally are. With the fulsome flattery that was common to the day, but sat so ill on Swift, it mingles symptoms of the gnawing discontent that breaks out at the thought of the dependent position in which, with all the possibilities that he felt within him, he was still placed, and still likely to remain. To be Sir William Temple's trusted secretary, was better than to be what he had been before, a sort of upper servant: but it was still torture to a mood and temper such as Swift's. He had already, while in Temple's service, shaken off the awkwardness of the obscure and self-absorbed student, and, with some knowledge of the world, he might well wish to play a larger part therein.¹ But that he knew and could on occasion

¹ We have some proof of this in a curious little anecdote recalled to him thirty years later by Lord Castledurrow, who remembered

assert his own dignity only made Swift's position the more irksome at Moor Park. Smooth down the picture of the relation between the two as we may, it yet remains certain, that between Temple and Swift comparatively little sympathy could exist. They might mutually respect one another: they might agree in certain opinions: they might feel that each owed the other some gratitude, and on suitable occasions they might each take an opportunity, in well-balanced language, to express it. But after all it remains an unchangeable fact, that no two characters could be more unlike. All that made Swift's strength—his absolute intolerance of convention, of authority, of pedantry: his power of detecting what was unreal or pretentious: his morbid desire to probe sores, to spare no smiling surfaces, to cut into the quick—all these are the very opposite of what can have suited Temple, or have allowed peace to his serene self-complacency. In the house of his patron, Swift must not only have felt that his talents were lost, but that he could not freely express his own thoughts. With some men that suppression might have been well; with Swift, already painfully straining at a process of self-torture, which a larger sphere of active work might have made less intense, it could only have been entirely ill. It is clear from these early poems, even through the mist of conventional

how, in his boyhood, he and Swift had been abused by a drunken boatman about his fare, and had been surrounded by an angry crowd, whose threatenings had been calmed only by the demeanour of Swift producing in the crowd the pacifying effect of the "*vir pietate gravis*" of Virgil.

eulogy under which he spoke, that Swift prized above all things his honesty and independence : that he saw how easily both might be lost : and that this dread inspired much of his discontent. All this appears in the poem on Sir William Temple's recovery. Inspired or dictated by the concern which it was becoming that the dependant should show in his patron's illness, the poem proceeds for the most part in the strain of subtilized exaggeration in which the "metaphysical" poets had imitated or travestied intensity of feeling. Ghastly fear had shaken each mind, as the Atheist's mind is shaken by the convulsions of nature ; grief had traced its watery footsteps in Dorinda's¹ face, and had flung sables on each menial look : the lackeys, in short, looked as grave as if the sun had gone out of heaven. Such are the stilted exaggerations which run through the piece. Then, by a strange device, his Muse appears to Swift, to listen to moralizings on the theme ; and it is in these moralizings that we come to the real interest of the poem : for it is here that Swift, with no great amount of relevancy, describes his own condition. Of set purpose he is involved and obscure : for it was his object to pretend that the passion he felt tearing at his heart was caused by intense grief at his patron's malady. But in spite of himself he breaks beyond his theme, and

¹ Dorinda is the poet's name for Martha, Lady Giffard. Dorothea is the name he gives to Dame Dorothy, Sir William's wife. It is she, and not Lady Giffard, as Mr. Forster by a slip of the pen asserts, that is described as "peaceful, wise, and great." Swift was conventional enough in these eulogies : but his picture of Dorinda is not quite so insincere as such flattery would imply. He detested her, and even the poem shows no affectation of regard.

at last bursts into this passionate remonstrance with the force within him that he felt was driving him from all easy converse with his fellow-men.

“To thee I owe that fatal bent of mind
Still to unhappy restless thoughts inclined ;
To thee, what oft I vainly strive to hide,
That scorn of fools, by fools mistook for pride ;
From thee whatever virtue takes its rise,
Grows a misfortune, or becomes a vice ;
Such were thy rules to be poetically great.
‘Stoop not to int’rest, flattery, or deceit ;
Nor with hired thoughts be thy devotion paid ;
Learn to disdain their mercenary aid ;
Be this thy sure defence, thy brazen wall,
Know no base action, at no guilt turn pale ;
And since unhappy distance thus denies
T’ expose thy soul clad in this poor disguise ;
Since thy few ill-presented graces seem
To breed contempt where thou hast hoped esteem.”

It is, perhaps, worth noticing how little some of the rhymes here correspond with the accuracy of Swift's later poetical efforts. But it is far more important to notice how every line is surcharged with personal reference, and how deep that misery that pursued Swift's later years had, even thus early, struck its roots. In the case of Swift, as with all men who begin the struggle of life by combating forces that, in the eyes of other men, are mere figments of a heated and disordered imagination, the question is sure to occur, what justification was there for all this gloom and misanthropy? Before our sympathy is asked, have we not a right to know on what real troubles we are to spend it? On the answer to that

question depends the feeling with which we shall pursue the life of Swift. If we cannot condone much to the child born and nurtured in dependence, taken from his mother's care before he could know its value ; educated under the eye of a stern and grudging uncle ; to one whose opening career was broken by the troubles of his country, and whose spirit, to the last degree passionate and impetuous, was harnessed to the methodical routine of a timid and somewhat pedantic master, unfit to take the measure of Swift's powers, but disposed to look upon their occasional assertion as the unwarranted although perhaps excusable eccentricities of an ill-trained youth : if to all this, and to the fact that the very strength and unruliness of his powers were a source of uneasiness and of foreboding to Swift, we are not prepared to excuse much, then the biography of Swift must bring to us not a strain of vivid human interest, but the perpetual irritation that powers, always great, but often restless, morbid, and undisciplined, must produce.

There was indeed one other very real and very terrible excuse for Swift. Amongst all the stories of mental struggle of which our literary annals are full, there is none which is so full of mysterious interest, as that of Swift. Beyond all the troubles of fierce temper, violent emotions and overstrained self-inspection ; beyond all the ravages wrought upon a high-strung nature by years of dependence, poverty and repression ; beyond the loneliness that came from his scornful pride, Swift had another burden to bear. This was the foreboding of mental darkness.

Though insanity, even at the end, scarcely seemed to release him from the pains of self-consciousness, yet the dread of it hung over him ceaselessly through life. It was no process of gradual decay. Until it dealt its final and decisive blow, it neither clouded nor impaired the clearness of his intellect. But ever-recurring pain warned him that the inevitable and unconquerable physical cause was there, and the struggle seemed only the more intense from the strength of the citadel that was at last to be overthrown. We shall have to return to this more than once when the symptoms become more marked : but thus much it is well to lay down at the outset of Swift's life. To say what he had to say with absolute simplicity : to be clear as to his own position and his own aims : to be misled by no abstractions—these were main objects in Swift's life. But, for all that, it was a life darkened by constant struggle, foreseeing defeat at last, and made melancholy by the physical inroads through which that defeat was finally accomplished.

Of these mere physical causes it belongs rather to medical science than to literary biography to speak. Their outward symptoms were those two maladies of giddiness and deafness which from the age of twenty to his death never for any long period left him. What they meant, how they arose, what tended to their aggravation, it is hard to say.¹ Swift himself

¹ In dealing with Swift's latest years, we shall necessarily be brought more into contact with the theories that have been advanced in explanation of the facts which Swift's biography discloses.

was fond of recurring to the theory of some trifling occasion, such as an early surfeit of fruit or an accidental chill. On these, the first and last words have been spoken by Johnson. "The original of diseases," he says, "is commonly obscure ; and almost every boy eats as much fruit as he can get, without any inconvenience." Swift no doubt felt in later years some injury to his health both from fruit and from chills. But with no undue confidence we may assert that the real source of the disease lay more deep ; and medical investigation, if it does not absolutely prove, is at least consonant with the belief that he suffered from structural malformation near the brain. Whatever its character might be, that malformation never till the end obscured the marvellous lucidity of his thought, but neither did it ever suffer him to forget the signs of disease that it produced. In Swift we have one whose clearness of intellectual vision never needs to ask for a lenient judgment, but whose moral depression calls from first to last for all the forbearance we can show.

But whatever the underlying troubles that vexed Swift's spirit, and were forcing their way through his immature attempts in literature, the question that now forced itself on him, and with increasing urgency as his position became both more doubtful and more irksome, was, how a livelihood could be gained at once permanent and independent. So long as Temple lived, it was clear that Swift would be welcomed as an inmate of Moor Park. The residence with Temple had done much for him. To what he

there learned, some of the peculiar force that marks off his political pamphlets from all others, may perhaps be ascribed.¹ To the quiet and leisurely observation of men who had played large parts upon the world's stage, he had been able to join close attention to the moods and whims of the country bumpkins round Farnham. When opportunity offered, with his usual love of hard exercise, he used to make his way on foot to London, scanning then and on his many journeys to Leicester, the manners of the road, and learning much that he afterwards put to good account.² But much as he gained here, he gained it through a trying medium. Even the advantages, such as they were, might not all attend a longer residence: and meanwhile, the opportunity of gaining for himself a secure and independent position was rapidly passing. The previous course of his education, the want of any technical training for another profession, the opening for influence which it naturally, and almost alone, presented, had turned his thoughts to the Church.³ But, he tells

¹ By Lord Macaulay, in a well-known passage in the *Essay on Temple*, the part which this residence had in developing the practical power of Swift as a political writer, is described with something of rhetorical exaggeration, which ignores the natural genius of the man, and magnifies the force of circumstances. Unfortunately for this theory those political tracts which come nearest to his residence with Temple are indubitably the weakest.

² The story of his lodging at penny hedge-inns, and paying sixpence for clean sheets, is well known. Lord Orrery ascribes it to vulgarity: Johnson to curiosity or thrift.

³ "It is easier to provide for ten men in the Church than one in a civil employment."—*Swift to Lord Peterborough*, May 4, 1711. The same was probably Swift's opinion now, in his twenty-fifth year.

us, he had a scruple of entering the Church merely for support. He was clearly in a difficult position. To Temple he had to represent his desire as that of securing an independence. Yet he hesitated to break with Temple and secure that independence in the only way open to him, until he found he could do it without the suspicion, to himself or to others, of a merely mercenary motive. Better than that might even be the acceptance of the King's offer of a captaincy of dragoons. It was needful to do what Swift hated, to press his patron for help : and thus it was that urged, perhaps, by his importunity, Sir William made an offer of a post which he knew Swift would be little inclined to accept, that of clerk at £120 a year in his own sinecure office of the Rolls at Dublin. As Temple no doubt expected, Swift refused. To have held a petty and subordinate post in the very law courts where some of his kinsmen had been, and where others still were, leading counsellors, would have wounded his pride to the quick. But Sir William's offer had at least taken away the possibility of any reproach hereafter that he had entered the ranks of the Church merely for what it had to give.

It was voluntarily, and not by compulsion, that he now accepted the career to which his connexions, his education, his opportunities, possibly also his inclination, had turned his thoughts. In November, 1692, not long after his Oxford degree, as we have seen, he had this intention pretty clearly in view. From the King, in some of his frequent colloquies, he

had obtained some hopes of a prebend, should one conveniently fall vacant: and he may even then have cherished those dreams which remained with him long after, of a secure retreat at Windsor, where the temptations to the fray would have been far removed from him, and where genial ease and dignity might have brought to him a content which he fancied would not pall. But he complains of Temple as remiss in fulfilling his promises of aid: and the complaints ripened, till, at length, in May, 1694, he left Moor Park in pique. In telling of this break with the past,¹ he speaks of his intention of taking orders in September of that year. When he quitted Moor Park he went to his mother at Leicester, and finally to Ireland, soon after, in June 1694, to be ordained. But he had still some difficulties to overcome. He was forgotten at Trinity College. It was long since he had taken his degree; and even had it not been so, the manner of taking it was not much in his favour. Certificates as to his conduct during these intervening years were absolutely necessary. Some of the Irish bishops were friends of his family, but they could not set aside the rules of decorum. A humble and irksome letter had therefore to be written to Sir William Temple to beg for a certificate.² The task was the more difficult as they had parted

¹ "I left Sir William Temple a month ago, just as I foretold it to you: and everything happened thereupon just as I had guessed. He was extremely angry I left him: and yet would not oblige himself any farther than upon my good behaviour, nor would promise anything firmly to me at all."—*Swift to Mr. Deane Swift* (the elder), June 3, 1694.

² The letter is dated 6th October, 1694.

on terms that were at least cold, if they did not amount to an actual rupture. It must have gone sorely against the grain with Swift, to approach one from whom he thought he had merited more, and who yet judged, as he was well aware, that Swift had acted with absolute ingratitude. He knows "how much he is fallen in his Honour's thoughts." But he must throw himself "upon his Honour's mercy": he can scarcely ask his Honour to deign to stoop to a thought of his affairs, but his faults have been follies or infirmities: and for these he would entreat leniency.¹ Some men might have written such a letter, and learned only the lessons of prudence that the task inculcated: with Swift no experience was gained, but the boundless pride that was yet to make great men tremble, was wounded to the quick. To outward appearance the wound healed over. It says much, indeed, for the foundation of solid mutual respect that subsisted between Swift and Temple, that the humble letter had the effect of bringing the friends together. The certificate was promptly sent. Swift was ordained deacon on the 25th of October, 1694, by Dr. Moreton, Bishop of Kildare:² and priest

¹ The letter, which Mr. Temple called Swift's "penitential letter," before printed from a transcript, has been printed from the original by Mr. Locker in his *Patchwork*, p. 77. This shows the former version to have contained no important variations from the original. I cannot agree with Mr Forster in thinking the letter to be couched in no more than the conventional language of respect.

² The autobiography gives the name rightly, and Mr. Forster was in error in his correction of it. His mistake arose from a misreading of the signature to the orders of ordination. "*Gul. Darensis*" is William of Kildare, and not of Derry, as Mr. Forster supposed.—*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Nov., 1879.

on the 13th of January, 169 $\frac{5}{4}$. His family influence, which, fallen though it was, was still considerable, stood him in good stead: before the close of the month he was presented by Lord Capel, then Lord Deputy, to the prebend of Kilroot, near Belfast. From that day Swift was his own master.

The state of the Irish Church when Swift entered it was curious enough. At its head stood Michael Boyle, a Tory of the days of Charles II., now blind and incapable, but fitly representing in himself the tone which the Restoration had imparted to the Church of Ireland under the guidance of the later Stuart rule. The shock of the Rebellion in 1641 had fallen upon what was in spirit as well as in fact to a great extent a missionary Church. That shock had been met in a few cases with the pure missionary wisdom of men like Bishop Bedell, the "*ultimus anglorum*," whom even foes lamented.¹ But for the most part the Church bowed beneath the storm: and when the dawn of better things had come with the Restoration, it had found the Church ready to enjoy to the full the ease and comfort of to-day with little thought of the morrow. Such was the spirit typified in Boyle, now Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of the Church. A second shock came in 1688, to terrify and well-nigh annihilate the Church: and when this new struggle was over, it found itself restored to safety, but restored with very new conditions. When

¹ Bishop Bedell died during the Irish Rebellion of 1641: and so universal was the respect in which he was held, that even the rebels turned out to fire a volley over his grave, calling out the words, "*Requiescat in pace ultimus anglorum*."

the Revolution settlement came, it formed a new type of leaders, such as Narcissus Marsh, successively Archbishop of Cashel, of Dublin, and of Armagh: and William King, afterwards, as Archbishop of Dublin, the friend and correspondent of Swift, but now Bishop of Derry. In some respects all seemed to go well with the restored Church; and when Swift was ordained, she was rising on the full tide of penal legislation against the Roman Catholics. The priests of that faith were to be driven from the shores of Ireland. To shelter them was to be high treason. To hold property, to pursue any money-yielding profession, was to be made difficult, and in some cases impossible, for a Roman Catholic. To seek an education in any of the Catholic seminaries abroad was forbidden to the Roman Catholic families. If a Protestant heiress married a Roman Catholic, her property was forfeited. All these laws had not yet been written in the statute-book: but the lines of the work which was meant to stamp out the proscribed religion, and to make the Protestant Church the symbol of conquest, were already laid: the programme of the campaign was already drawn up. But, on the other hand, if the Church felt any triumph in the abasement of her rival, there were flaws in her own prosperity. Much of her wealth had already fallen into the hands of laymen. Of her clergy many were starved. Of her benefices many were vacant. Congregations were scattered for want of room to house them. Her poor were uneducated. A Bill to provide more churches was set aside in 1698.

Another for the erection of free schools, which might have helped to secure her influence and given her the hold on the young which the Roman Catholic priest, in spite of persecution, was gaining, shared the same fate. The Church was to be taught that the dejection of her rival might secure her own safety, but would not swell her triumph: that should she be content to run in the political lines marked out for her, she might trust to protection, but could hope neither for enlarged dominion nor for spiritual freedom.

It is little wonder if some of the leaders of the Church were murmuring at the part which they were forced to play, and finding how hollow was the triumph which they had seemed to attain when Roman Catholic pretensions fell. The political governors of the kingdom held in their hands the powerful instruments which the penal statutes gave to them: but these were most useful when kept chiefly in reserve, and the political leaders were careful not to use them so as to make the Protestant Church too strong. "If one should measure our temper by our laws," says Bishop King in a letter to Bishop Burnet,¹ "I think we are little short of the Inquisition: but if by the execution of them, I doubt we shall seem as indifferent in matters of religion as our neighbours in Holland: whereas soft laws and strict execution are what wisdom and interest would recommend to us." The words were used when the temper of the nation, and of the leading churchmen, was being tried to the utmost, two years after Swift's ordination, by a Bill

¹ Mant's *History of the Church in Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 80.

which was to suspend the laws, for the sake of securing the King's person against danger. Enough of repressive power, it was felt, had been placed in the hands of the Government. The liberties of the country were threatened by a hundred instruments which were lying *in terrorem*. To add to these was not to secure the safety of Protestantism, but to seal the doom of freedom: and so first by the Lords, through the Bishops' influence, and then by the Commons, when it was revived in an amended shape, this obnoxious Bill was rejected. Such was the state of the Irish Church during the three or four years before and after 1694. The resistance in which the Church had appeared as the champion of national independence, was not, as we shall find, forgotten by the English Government as a lesson for the future.

It was in a period so critical to the Irish establishment that Swift joined her ranks. We find him settled at Kilroot early in 1695, with a living worth about £100 a year, of which his predecessor, the Reverend William Miln, had been deprived by a long-suffering Church, for immorality.¹ Kilroot was a country district, with some small aggregate of houses, washed by the waters of Belfast Lough. The churchmen were woefully few when Swift went there :

¹ It is perhaps only fair to Miln, to say that a letter in the Armagh Library, from the Bishop of Down to the Bishop of Meath, seems to show that the sentence had been one of suspension only, and not of deprivation. But the incumbent himself, and others with him, had taken the worse view: and before it was corrected, Swift had been appointed to the cure, without protest from Miln. Only three years afterwards, the Bishop of Down makes application, unsuccessfully, on his behalf.—*MS. letter in Records of Armagh* (transcribed for me by Mr. Reynell).

and tradition in the neighbourhood still tells how "the mad clergyman" vainly endeavoured to procure a congregation, by going to the shore, and gathering a crowd to see him "skip stones" into the sea.¹ Before very long Swift found friends in the neighbourhood. One was a Mr. Winder, a fellow-student at Oxford, now settled in the north of Ireland with a wife and family. Another was Waring, his friend at Trinity, of a rich Belfast family,² to whose sister, an heiress of some pretensions, Swift began, in want of other occupation, to show some attention. It was a weakness to which, as we saw in his short stay at Leicester in 1688, he had before been prone : against which he had been warned : but a "kind of folly," as he says, which he had thought himself able "to throw off at the porch" whenever he might choose to enter the Church. The tendency, however, to attract, to advise, to become a guide and an influence, to women, was one not, in Swift's case, to be checked so easily as he had once imagined : and this time it led in the sequel to what was at least an unpleasant incident. When this new fit was still upon him, he wrote a letter to Miss Waring, under the title of Varina, half fantastic, half passionate, and showing the flimsy and exaggerated emotions which were to be fairly expected in such a case. When the letter

¹ The tradition, like others of its type, would scarcely be worth repeating did it not serve, like them, to show the picture of Swift that has lingered in the minds of the people amongst whom he lived.

² They have given their name to Waring Street ; and their descendants afterwards moved to Waringstown in County Down.

was written,¹ he evidently was tired of his duties, or no duties, at Kilroot. Independence was much : but the banishment to a remote and Presbyterian locality was more than enough to balance even independence. To Swift, now as ever after, regret for what seemed to have passed from him was a stronger feeling than the determination to make the best of what was present. To add to his restlessness, Sir William Temple, knowing his value, was now inviting him back to Moor Park, where a position was open to him, sure to be very different from that which, even during the second residence, had been his. Was he to continue, then, at Kilroot, out of the bustle and noise of the world, courting none of the great, and interfering in the struggles of his fellows, if at all, only by his pen : varying his abundant leisure by fantastic lovemaking, and by inviting the sister of an old college companion to settle along with him into a dull and colourless obscurity ? Or was he, on the other hand, to yield to that impulse that called him in amongst the crowd of men, to take a part in stirring scenes ? Was he to form of his clerical duties a different, and perhaps a more secular, idea than that which he had cherished in the first flush of self-exacting ardour, when these duties were still in the distance ? On the eve of what, so far as we can gather, was meant only to be a short visit from Kilroot to his old patron, he wrote the letter to Miss Waring, offering his love in the usual language of over-wrought hyperbole, and asking hers in return with something of a peremptory tone, although he

¹ It is dated 29th April, 1696.

renounces all wish to touch her fortune. He was to start for England in a fortnight. If he could win her love, she might make of him what she would : he would spare no pains to push his advancement. When he wrote these words, they would suggest to the imagination of Miss Waring, not that kind of advancement that was ultimately his, but that which would gain the fancy of a woman bred to the every-day comforts of a Belfast citizen's home, and prepared by her dower to add some well-being to the Kilroot parsonage. If he could not win that love before he leaves Ireland, Ireland would see him no more, even were the King to send him back as deputy. What the lady's first answer was we can only guess : but clearly it contained the conventional amount of temporising : and at least it served to convince Swift that he was not fitted to bear with the caprices of a silly woman, whose conduct seems to have brought first into play that side of Swift's character over which a biographer would gladly pass. For the present this love episode rested. The fortnight passed, and he was still free from any ties : and he left Kilroot, as he had announced, for his projected visit to England.¹ The prebend was entrusted to the care of his friend Winder, whose "fastenings to the world" made even the temporary incumbency a boon : and as a fact, Swift never visited Kilroot again as its prebendary.

What he brought from thence, for his mental equipment, so slowly acquiring completeness, we may perhaps guess with some accuracy. Amongst the

¹ He left in May, 1696.

solitudes of the sea-washed parish he had learned how unfit he was to cultivate that quiet which he had fancied would suit him. Amongst the Presbyterians, who left his church empty, he conceived that violent prejudice to their sect which made of him their inveterate, and finally, their most dreaded, foe. From the Belfast magnates, he had perhaps acquired the rooted dislike to provincial society that gives rise to many a sarcastic touch in his journal. From his experience as a parish priest, he learned how ill the clerical life suited him, how hard would be the discipline that could fix him to his routine duties. With some added zest he renewed his residence with Temple, this time bringing with him the first instalment of the work that was to constitute his earliest title to enduring fame.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST ACTS IN SWIFT'S LITERARY AND POLITICAL CAREER

1696-1701

ÆTAT. 28-33

Swift's third residence at Moor Park—His occupations—Reading—His schemes of advancement—Lord Sunderland's patronage—Resignation of Kilroot—Esther Johnson—The early tie between her and Swift—*The Battle of the Books*—The literary controversy to which it was a contribution—Temple's *Ancient and Modern Learning*—Wotton's reply—Boyle and Bentley—Swift's place in the fray—The intention of the *Battle of the Books*—Swift learning his own powers—The death of Sir William Temple—A last effort for patronage—Enters the service of Lord Berkeley—His disappointments in Ireland—Residence at Dublin Castle—Early efforts in humour—Advancement in the Church—The last of Varina—The marriage of Swift's sister—Swift's return to London—The occasion of his first political essay—*Dissensions at Athens and Rome*—The reception, by the Whigs, of Swift's pamphlet—Acknowledged authorship—Another interview with the King—The strengthening of the tie to Stella.

SWIFT now came back to England flushed with that new desire for active life that followed as a reaction from the hopeless dulness of Kilroot. He came to settle at Moor Park, no longer as a servant, or even as a paid companion, raised, as caprice directed, into

unwonted favour and prominence, or again disturbed by cold and distant looks, the memory of which lived long with him: but as the friend and intimate, who might render services of great value to his patron, but who had the advantage of his own house and income to retire to, if that patron's treatment should again become irksome. Retirement had taught him not only his powers, but also the sort of life for which he was most fit. Henceforth there is a new decision about his actions: whatever errors he commits are due to the prejudices or the faults of manhood, not to the doubts, the irresolution, and the immaturity of youth.

But Swift brought with him from his retirement more than a formed character and a matured experience. He had now not only conceived, but in great part had executed, the *Tale of a Tub*.¹ His poetical essays had received a bitter rebuff: but the writer of the *Tale* required no critic to assure him that there was a line of authorship which he could make all his own.

While this new phase of his career was opening and while his book was lying beside him, and gradually taking its final shape, Swift was going through a wide range of reading.² Its details indicate a reader

¹ Deane Swift's story that Waring had seen the *Tale* must refer, not to the college days, to which Deane Swift assigns it, but to the days at Belfast. This is confirmed by Swift's own story in the preface, as to the date when it was written, which he had no reason to misrepresent.

² According to a memorandum of his own, entered by Dr. Lyons amongst his MS. notes on Hawkesworth's Life, his reading at this time was as follows:—

voracious, rather than systematic. There are six or seven volumes dealing with events of late political or ecclesiastical history: two of the early fathers, some books of travel of the order popular in Swift's day, and Blackmore's tedious epic of *Prince Arthur*.

From January 7, 1697.

Lord Herbert's Harry VIII., fol.
Sleidan's Comment., abstracted, fol.
Council of Trent, abstracted, fol.
Virgil, bis.
Horace, 9 vols.
Sir William Temple's Memoirs.
— Introduction.
Camden's Elizabeth.
Prince Arthur.
Histoire de Chypre.
Voyage de Syam.
Voiture.
Memoirs de Maurier.
Lucius Florus, ter.
Collier's Essays, 2 vols.
Count Gabalis.
Sir John Davies, Of the Soul.

Conformité de Religion, etc.
Dialogues des Morts, 2 vols.
Lucretius, ter.
Histoire de M. Constance.
Histoire d'Æthiopie.
Histoire de Côtes, etc.
Diodorus Siculus, abstr. fol.
Cyprian and Irenæus, abstr. fol.
Voyage de Maroc, etc.
Ælian, 1st vol.
Homer, Iliad and Odys.
Cicero's Epistles.
Bernier's Grand Mogul, 2 vols.
Burnet's Hist. of Reform, fol.
Petronius Arbiter.
Œuvres Mêlées, 5 vols.

From January 7, 1698.

Thucydides, by Hobbes, fol. abs.
Vossius de Sibyllinis.

Theophrasti Characteres.

The first on the list is the History by Lord Herbert of Cherbury, published in 1649. Sleidan's book is his Commentary on the Reformation: that which follows it is no doubt Paolo Sarpi's History (the translation of which was Johnson's earliest literary scheme). The Memoirs, by Maurier, are those of the Princes of Orange, written by Auberg de Maurier in 1682, and translated into English by Thomas Brown in 1692. Sir John Davies's poem, *Nosceteipsum*, or The Immortality of the Soul, was what gained him the patronage of James I., and possibly the fact that he was connected with Ireland as attorney-general, in James's reign, may have given Swift an interest in a book whose graceful conceits would seem otherwise little to his taste. The Count of Gabalis, written in French by the Abbé de Montfauçon de Villars, and translated into English in 1692, was the book on the Rosicrucian Mysteries, which suggested to Pope the machinery of the *Rape of the Lock*. From Irenæus, Swift took the cabalistic motto prefixed to the *Tale*

Of the few English authors whom he has noted in his memorandum, only one other is a poet, and he almost the last we might have fancied likely to suit the taste of Swift. Of the leading classical authors, on the other hand, every one is a poet, except Thucydides, who is read only in Hobbes's translation, and Cicero, who is read only in his epistles. Lucretius he had read three times. Swift could condone scepticism, when it was two thousand years old, and when it attacked no systems that he himself cherished. What-

of a Tub. Bernier was a French doctor who had spent some time in the Court of Aurengzebe, and who wrote an account of India, which not only gives a graphic picture of what he saw himself, but also an epitome of the Indian dynasties and their history. It may be that some of Bernier's accounts of battles that he saw with his own eyes, may have helped Swift in the imagery of the *Battle of the Books*, and Swift certainly had him in his memory in some passages of *Gulliver*. Vossius de Sibyllinis is the volume by the younger (Isaac) Vossius, who had died Canon of Windsor, not many years before. It is an erudite discussion on the origin of the pseudo-Sibylline prophecies, which claimed to be those of the old Cumæan Sibyl, but which Vossius holds to have been forged by Jews, in order to enhance the importance of their nation, by those expectations of a Saviour of humanity, which are reproduced by Virgil in the 4th eclogue. I can trace nothing in Vossius's book likely to have suggested any feature in the *Tale of a Tub*: and Swift can have had no reason for reading it, save interest in the historical episode of which it treats. It is easy to guess the interest that Theophrastus would have for Swift: but it seems strange that, if the obscurity of the Greek was there no hindrance to Swift, and if he was industrious enough to make an abstract of the bulky historic library of Diodorus, from the original, he should have been content to take Thucydides only through the medium of Hobbes. Ælian and Diodorus indeed, as well as Florus and Petronius Arbiter, might have been read by Swift only to gather from them a store of anecdote and illustration: but that the Epitome of Florus was actually read thrice, would seem to show that, in reading these authors, he was completing, in this year, a previous course of Roman history founded on the worthier authority of Livy and Tacitus, with whom he might wish to compare their more feeble fellow-historians.

ever his views of Epicurean philosophy, the cynical melancholy of Lucretius could not fail to touch a chord of sympathy in Swift.

According to the story of Deane Swift, whose authority may very probably be some reminiscence of Swift's own old age, he was reading at this period about sixteen hours a day. In the midst of this reading, he took that regular and violent exercise which almost to the end of his life he found to be an absolute necessity: exercise of that fierce and excited kind which rather served as an escape from too violent emotions than as an aid to his physical health. At Moor Park, as, curiously enough, at many another spot where Swift lived, tradition names a small hill close to the house, up and down which Swift is said to have run, when the strain of mental excitement made a break of a few minutes necessary.

Swift had returned to Moor Park in May, 1696. In the studies just described he soon forgot the passion for Varina (as his letter had termed Miss Waring), and passed to far other interests than those that had possessed him in the midst of the alien surroundings of Kilroot. He was now the guest of his former patron, treated with consideration that contrasted with his old position: and one short letter written in 1696 helps to give us an idea of his new footing. The address is wanting, but it has been presumed to have been written to his sister or to Esther Johnson.¹

¹ Or, as Mr. Forster with good reason thought, to Stella's mother, Mrs. Bridget Johnson, who afterwards became Mrs. Mose, on her marriage to Sir William Temple's steward. Swift's sister, Jane Swift, although she afterwards had some relations with the

"I desire your absence heartily," he says (Esther Johnson and her mother were in London with Sir William Temple and his family), "for now I live in great state, and the cook comes in to know what I please to have for dinner: I ask very gravely what is in the house, and accordingly give orders for a dish of pigeons, or, etc." "It is a vast condescension," he says jocularly, that those at Moor Park should "be remembered at all by you in your greatness."

His direct and personal interest in politics now became stronger, even while his literary schemes were widening; and during the year and a half when he was administering his charge at Kilroot through a substitute, he became more and more drawn into the struggles of the time. At length in the autumn of 1697, he determined to resign the post to which he no longer felt inclined to return, and to throw himself into a new field of activity. The country was on the eve of an election, and debates ran high on the question of keeping up a standing army. Robert Harley, Swift's friend of later years, had just carried a resolution, far from palatable to the King, for the material reduction of the forces. Lord Sunderland, feared by some as the adviser of an enlarged army, feared by others as one who treacherously advised that enlargement as a means of lessening the popularity of the Protestant succession, was then Lord Chamberlain: and much as his tricks and turnings had alienated

Temple family, and died in Mrs. Mose's house, had not at this time any position in the Moor Park family which would make it likely that the letter was addressed to her.

others, he still appeared to possess the confidence of the King. He knew, however, the slackness of his own tenure of power : and perhaps this consciousness prompted some patronage which he now showed to Swift, who had met him at Moor Park, and whose abilities he may there have discerned. Be that as it may, Swift certainly began the series of his ill-starred political connexions by attaching himself to Sunderland.¹ Some scheme was on foot : Swift was to be employed in some means by which the veteran plotter was hoping to secure and perpetuate his power. In December, 1697, Swift had arranged to resign his living for this new employment : he managed to secure the nomination for his friend Winder : but before December was ended or the resignation was actually completed, Sunderland had been dismissed. "Lord Sunderland fell," says Swift three months later, "and I fell with him." But his political activity was not checked even by that fall. "Since then," he goes on, "there have been other courses, which if they succeed I shall be proud to own the methods, or if otherwise very much ashamed."² Meanwhile, he assures his successor, Mr. Winder, to whom he writes, that he in no way regrets the decision. He knows how the tongues of gossips will be set in motion by his resignation. He foresees how that gossip will find

¹ *Swift to Mr. Winder*, April 1, 1698. First printed by Mr. Forster.

² In the same letter. This is an early one of the many expressions which Swift turns so as to suggest an interpretation adverse to himself. Its probable meaning is, that though he is sure of the honesty of his means, he will still be ashamed of having tried at all, if these means do not end successfully.

additional matter for discussion in the supposed desire to rid himself of an entanglement with the once adored Varina. But he is sure of the wisdom of his act, though he has "no way of convincing people in the clouds." He has been assured by one or two anonymous correspondents of the ill designs by which his old friend had supplanted him; but these are matters "too tedious to trouble you or myself with." All he has now to do is to give minute directions as to the packing of his books: to plead for indulgence for the tenants who lately were his, and now are Winder's: and with assurances of his lasting friendship to bid good-bye to Kilroot for ever.¹

But it was not only public and literary occupation that gave, in Swift's eyes, new attractions to residence at Moor Park. The inmates there were the same as before, but his relation to at least one of them had changed. Temple was feebler in health, drawing near to his end, and more dependent on Swift's help. Lady Giffard was still there, and still the chief authority in the house; perhaps increasing in the

¹ According to one scandal, long ago so completely disproved (did it not, indeed, disprove itself) as scarcely to need mention, Swift's resignation was due to a charge of rape brought against him. Another very different story represents him as resigning, on an impulse of benevolence, in order to provide for a poorer clergyman. Both the slander and the praise must be rejected. Scott accepts the second story, which the facts now adduced from Swift's own letter disprove: and he attributes it to Swift's "exalted benevolence." The phrase is really not applicable to Swift. He was benevolent: but his benevolence arose often from a whim, or an impulse, often from a sudden constraint of duty, which urged him to counteract a parsimonious inclination by giving. Wayward as it is, there is something attractive about Swift's benevolence: but we can scarcely call it "exalted."

mind of Swift that antipathy that became afterwards so marked. But there was another whose presence attracted Swift and helped to drive from his heart all thoughts of Varina ; one who was gradually asserting over him an influence, perhaps as yet unknown to either, but destined to prove so fateful for the future of both.

Esther Johnson was now, at the period of his renewed residence with Temple, fifteen years of age. When he had begun his former residence she had been a child of scarcely eight years old. Even then her early education had fallen to his charge : and the despised and obscure student had found in his little pupil the one heart in the house at Moor Park that bent entirely to his own. When he returned, the attraction was strengthened. To her, if to none other in the house, this return meant the change from dreary and formal routine to the ever-stirring contact of a mind that even thus early was to her the centre of all intellectual light. To her the genius was clear that had not yet dawned for others. To the insight of her love, the hopes, the fears, the misgivings, that were hidden from others, must, if we are to guess from her later relation to Swift, have been partly, at least, laid bare. For her, if for no other, his presence was the brightest gleam of sunshine. Her sympathies were open to every mood that was his : and it is in these three years of later residence with Temple that the foundations of that close and yet most mysterious bond which grew up between them, were laid. Irksome as was much about his

position in Moor Park, it was the love for Stella that made its memory sweet, that made the galling dependence of its earlier years lose its bitterness in recollection, and that made its associations dear to him in later life. For Swift, during these early years, the young mind looking to his, and his only, for guidance, was enough to make him feel his life not quite lonely, dreary as its course had as yet been; enough to give him a background of restful fidelity, amid the misgivings of early efforts. The feeling was quickly ripening into something more: but we may watch its growth, without assuming it to have been, thus early, what it afterwards became.

Stella was now, as Swift recalled long after, when the last chapter of the romance had been closed,¹ passing from the constant sickliness of childhood into the more robust health of early womanhood. She was looked upon "as one of the most beautiful, graceful, and agreeable young women in London": but her beauty was not so much that of form and feature, as of striking and attractive piquancy. Her hair was of raven black: her eyes sparkling: and her mien one of thrilling animation. The animation would not be least kindled, the piquancy not least attractive, for him whose coming was like sunlight to the maiden in the dull routine of Moor Park, whose genius was as yet a mine undiscovered by others but her. But the beauty, the sparkling wit, and the liveliness of Esther Johnson, made her position still less that of a menial, and furnished her with opportunities of mixing with

¹ "On the death of Mistress Johnson." See Appendix, No. XI.

the fashionable world. She went with the family on their periodical visits to London. She was known in society. The last description applicable to her is that of the inmate of the servants' hall, scarcely noticed by the master of the house. Nothing but love of striking effect could have suggested to Macaulay that the bond between Swift and her was that of the needy curate finding his advantage in courting the waiting-maid, because no other ambition could be his. Neither Swift nor Stella as yet, consciously, thought of lovemaking: but if they had, the courtship would have been addressed by a man of so far assured position, to a maiden whose choice of suitors might have been large enough.

While the inner romance of Swift's life was thus gradually taking shape, amidst his reading, his schemes of political advancement, and his revision of the *Tale of a Tub*, another work came to occupy some of this year 1697. The earliest of his more notable books was now launched upon the limited circle for whom alone it was at first intended, although not printed for some years; and it is to this part of Swift's life that the consideration of the *Battle of the Books* belongs. It was written to defend the position in which Swift's patron had been placed in a fashionable but evanescent literary controversy, suggested by the example of contemporary French literature, and fomented in England by angry personal disputes.

Amongst the various theories bred by the complacent humour of France under the Grand Monarch, there was one which claimed superiority for the pro-

ducts of that age and nation over all that had preceded. A few foreigners might indeed be permitted to share in the superiority: but only so far as they had approached the models of propriety which the Academy of France produced. For the rest, the great names of the remote past enjoyed, it was affirmed, a reputation which was the effect only of the glamour of antiquity, and of the blindness of monkish pedants. It was their privilege to have contributed, possibly, some stones which went to raise the proud monument of French taste and genius: but their claim to equality, much more than to superiority, was based only on a degrading superstition. The paradox was one very likely to be advanced in an age so complacent as that of Louis XIV.: but much more certain was it to be quickly shattered in an age which recognized so well what it owed to antiquity, and whose literary chiefs, if somewhat stiff and exacting in their canons, were yet secure enough in the permanence and catholicity of their genius, not to be blind to the inimitable grace of earlier models. The paradox had been broached by Fontenelle: and was repeated by Perrault in a poem read before the Academy in 1687, with the title of "*Le Siècle de Louis le Grand.*" It was not long before the author of the paradox had to regret its enunciation. The struggle became a fierce one; and Perrault found himself overwhelmed with ridicule. Hardest of all, those whom he had praised too lavishly resented eulogies paid at the expense of those whom their literary genius taught them to recognize as masters. Boileau laughed to scorn the

criticism which placed him above Horace. The struggle was so one-sided that the rash adherents of the moderns were obliged to make their surrender.

Such was the position of the controversy when Temple, whose interest in French literature was large, introduced the topic to English readers. In a treatise on Ancient and Modern Learning, written in his most chaste and dignified prose, he supported the cause of the ancients. Avowedly the essay is rather literary than critical: and here and there remarks are introduced which give a graceful turn to the paragraphs, but could hardly be gravely employed as arguments in the controversy. Legendary resources are drawn upon so as to embellish with something of biographical detail what are little more than names in ancient literature. In many passages Temple has doubtless laid himself open to the ridicule which has been thrown upon him with much skill, but little measure, by Lord Macaulay. But the intention of the essay has been purposely distorted by Macaulay. Appeals made by Temple to the general impressions which are to be drawn from classical legends or literature, are twisted by Macaulay into positive assertions falsely claiming historical basis. Temple does not for instance seek to prove, as Macaulay pretends, the excellence of ancient music by saying that Orpheus made trees dance with his lute, or that Arion escaped drowning by charming the dolphins: but only seems to hint, harmlessly enough, that these legends prove the power of music to have been not unknown or unappreciated by the ancients. He does not lament,

as Macaulay avers, the loss of conjuring ; but regrets that superstitious fancies now supply the place of that deftness and skill by which he supposes the ancients to have attained the same ends. The treatise is of little value save for its gracefulness of language and tone, but it served very well to give to English readers an introduction to a topic in the literature of their more polite and facile neighbours. What it wants in criticism, it here and there supplies by a humour which Macaulay leaves out of sight. An eloquent passage on the shortcomings and the miseries and weaknesses of humanity, is closed by the remark, which gives the reader a glimpse of something wider than literary criticism, that, "God be thanked, man has this one felicity to comfort and support him, that, in all ages, in all things, every man is always in the right." He gives, in a manner not unlike that of Swift, a description of pedantry as an epidemic that attacks the weaker members of the commonwealth of learning first : that spreads by degrees to the vigorous and strong : and lastly, makes all the neighbours shun the place as tainted with the plague. "This dislike or apprehension turned, like all fear, to hatred, and hatred to scorn. The rest of the neighbours began first to rail at pedants, then to ridicule them. The learned began to fear the same fate, and that the pigeons should be taken for daws, because they were all in a flock : and because the poorest and meanest of the company were proud, the best and the richest began to be ashamed."

Thus begun by one whose name, illustrious in

politics, brought dignity to the dispute, the controversy became at once much canvassed in England. The first who entered the lists against Temple was William Wotton, then a young man about Swift's own age. His name raises associations sufficiently odd and characteristic not to be passed over without reference. Born in 1666, he had roused the curiosity and anticipations of all the learned world by the time that he was six years old. His father, the Reverend Henry Wotton, then wrote a pamphlet which he dedicated to Charles II., and in which he cited the testimony of a whole crowd of learned men, who, astonished at the prodigy of infantile learning, hastened to pay their incense at the shrine of one who was to prove that the world was not old or effete, and who was to shine as the miracle of the coming age. The child at six knew Latin, Hebrew and Greek, as familiarly as his mother tongue, and year by year he seemed to add to his marvellous acquisitions. At ten years of age he entered Catherine Hall at Cambridge: at thirteen he had obtained his degree. It is scarcely necessary to say that this miracle of memory had few other intellectual gifts: and that after entering the lists against Temple, and striving to maintain them against Swift, he faded into a maturity of little importance, and, according to one not well-authenticated story, of some eccentricity. To Temple he had replied in his *Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning*, published in 1694. It was a fair and judicial summary of the chief points in dispute, which dealt with Temple moderately, as his

rank and dignity demanded, but decisively, as became the student and the scholar arguing against the diplomatist and man of the world. In the argument he distinctly came off the best of the two.

The struggle was now transplanted to English soil. In France it had been a battle of styles: in England it was something more. Here, an affectation of classical knowledge was modish: the reaction against certain eccentricities which flourished under the countenance of the Royal Society was strong. To write graceful Latin verses, to affect a general acquaintance with the classics, was the mark of a cultured gentleman: to be interested in the achievements of the new sciences, to find entertainment in the futilities of the "Men of Gresham," was the mark of a pedant and a dullard. The Christ Church wits chose the former part, and in their ridicule of scientific pedantry they included even Sir Isaac Newton. Against them they had at once the solid acquirements of rising physicists, and the accurate learning and trenchant style of Bentley. It became a struggle in England, of what always claimed to be, and often was, mother wit, against what was stigmatized, and sometimes justly, as the pedantry of virtuosos.

But the dispute now took a new and accidental direction. In a casual paragraph of his *Essay*, Temple had undertaken to prove the careless paradox that the farther back we went the better were the authors. Following the imaginary chronicle that some bookseller's hack might have supplied, he finds the earliest in order of time to have been Phalaris and Æsop,

whose names were attached to certain pieces, the spuriousness of which was already a mere commonplace of criticism. Temple, whose opinion on the matter was utterly worthless, set aside the view, already an ordinary one, that these pieces were spurious: and in a literary freak took up the cudgels in their favour, praising especially the so-called Epistles of Phalaris, and finding them "to have more grace, more spirit, more force of wit and genius, than any others I have ever seen, either ancient or modern." Such praise is in itself a proof that the paragraph was little else than thoughtless phrasing: but it was an unlucky slip. It suggested to the fashionable, but unsound scholars of the Christ Church clique, a new edition of these Epistles, which had earned the praise of so polite a disputant as Temple. The editing of the spurious Epistles was entrusted to Charles Boyle, afterwards Earl of Orrery, a scion of a house that was in more than one of its branches to have some connexion with Swift. While adopting Temple's suggestion, however, Boyle did not fall into his error as to the genuineness of the Epistles, but expressly sets it aside.¹ But another circumstance involved

¹ Boyle, in his Latin preface, deals with the different views that had been maintained as to the authorship, and guards himself against attributing the Epistles to Phalaris. If, he admits, certain facts given by Diodorus Siculus are true, "*actum est de Phalaridis titulo.*" He sees the unlikelihood of their having obtained no record in any ancient author, if really written by one so well known as the tyrant: and he sees the objection to the dialect. Differing again from Temple, he even finds that his author is "*interdum frigidior.*" Bentley showed his scholarship not by the discovery that the Epistles were spurious, but in the arguments and illustrations by which he maintained and proved them to be so.

him, along with Temple, in an attack from Bentley. In the course of his work, young Boyle borrowed from the Royal Library at St. James's a manuscript of the spurious Letters: but the loan was summarily recalled by Bentley, as librarian, before its collation was complete. The motive was assumed to be jealousy against the Oxford clique: and stung by resentment for it, Boyle referred in his Latin preface to the churlish act of Bentley, as in keeping with his rare courtesy—*pro singulari humanitate suâ*. Bentley's ire was roused, and it involved both the offending Boyle and Temple, whose unlucky preference had brought Phalaris on the scene. Wotton was preparing a new edition of his *Reflections*, and now Bentley added to it, as an appendix, a Dissertation upon the pretended Epistles, in which Temple and his dignified patronage of the ancients were made to appear ridiculous enough. The controversy had now passed far away from the lines suggested by Perrault and Fontenelle. It was a controversy no longer about a theory of literary criticism, but between two widely diverse literary cliques. Its object was not to maintain an opinion, but through that opinion to wound an opponent. In France men had taken different views according to the tendency of their tastes: in England they took opposite sides according to the force of their personal animosities.

For Bentley to overturn the absurdity involved in Temple's eulogy was a matter of ease. In the first edition of the Dissertation, he maintained the spuriousness of the Epistles: in the second, two years later,

he proves his thesis with greater elaboration. With a scholarship that absolutely dwarfs that of his contemporaries, he throws one argument after another with the lavish extravagance of a man who feels his store inexhaustible. He writes in a spirit of rollicking triumph, and proves that if the Epistles so be-lauded were true, Phalaris had borrowed money from men who lived 300 years after his death, had destroyed towns that were not founded, and conquered nations that had no names: that he had overturned the chronology of Thucydides and Herodotus and proved their histories mere fables: that he had transposed the events of his own day with those that happened long after he was dead: and finally that he had written in an Attic dialect which no man used during his lifetime, and which bore no resemblance to that which he, a Dorian, could have used. Temple's un-guarded eulogy was not only overturned, it was scattered into thin air, by this learned sarcasm.

While the answer to Bentley's first attack was still in preparation by Boyle and his more able friends, and while, at Christ Church, Atterbury and Smal-ridge were preparing for him that armour, in which, as a gift from all the gods,¹ Boyle arrays himself in the *Battle of the Books* before he goes to attack Bentley, Swift stepped upon the scene. He took the side which, as well by personal connexion, as by the tendency of his genius, was his, that of the brilliant coterie of wits, against the reputed pedantry of

¹ This was the reply, "*Dr. Bentley's Dissertation Examined*," published in 1696.

natural science. Nothing could have been devised for the help of his patron with better skill or with greater tact, than was Swift's contribution to the fray. Temple had begun the controversy with what was little more than a rhetorical proluision, embellished here and there with a few striking thoughts. But he had been dragged down from this graceful dilettantism, and now found himself in a position galling to his dignity, attacked by a mere scholar on a very definite point of scholarship. He had begun, but wisely forbore to complete, a reply. He could not enter into minute details with his opponent: to do so would have been beneath the calm dignity of official retirement—nay more, Temple probably had the sense to see that it would have been extremely dangerous. But now the dependant, whose talents had only slowly forced themselves on Temple's notice, was to do what neither Temple nor all the phalanx of Christ Church wits could manage. He was to force the controversy off the lines of detail, to bring it back to generals, to draw it into a larger arena of human interest, where his own weapons of finer temper, and his own arm of wider sweep, could tell upon the issue. The contest still raged for a time between champions so acute as Atterbury, and so learned as Bentley. But their contributions are remembered only by name, and are read only by the curious. Swift's one effort remains as the single enduring fragment cast up by this very passing volcano of controversy: and the further progress of that controversy has no place in his biography.

In the reply which Wotton afterwards published, he attempted, amongst other devices for turning the force of Swift's ridicule, to fix upon him the charge of plagiarism. "I have been assured," he said, with the affectation common to weakness, of disdaining personal knowledge, "I have been assured that the Battle in St. James's Library is, *mutatis mutandis*, taken out of a French book, entitled *Combat des Livres*, if I mis-remember not." The charge was repudiated years later by Swift with a warmth of indignation which he rarely expended on any point appertaining to his literary fame;¹ but it was notwithstanding repeated by Dr. Johnson and others down to Scott, without the precaution of verifying the charge. The real title of the work, to which Scott attaches the name of Coutray, was not *Combat des Livres*, but *Histoire poétique de la guerre nouvellement déclarée entre les Anciens et les Modernes*; so that it had not, at least, the merit of suggesting to Swift the name of his book. It was not, as Scott calls it, a poem, as of its twelve books only the first is in verse. It was published in 1688, and the author was François de Callières. The author himself describes it as "a sort of poem in prose of a newly-invented style."² Swift very vigor-

¹ In the Author's Apology prefixed to the edition of 1710, and written in June, 1709.

² The accounts of the book which have been accepted and passed current, curiously illustrate the ease with which error is repeated. Wotton began with a wrong title: Johnson repeated the mistake: and Nichols first corrected this. Scott first asserted the author to be Coutray, whose name must have been suggested by some curious freak of memory. From him it has been accepted without dispute: and one writer after another has spoken of this French author with an air of familiarity, without having ascertained

ously protests his absolute ignorance of the book : and while there is no ground for supposing that the disavowal was insincere, yet the trifling points of coincidence are quite sufficient to make it probable that the book had passed under Swift's notice in Temple's house, along with a crowd of forgotten authorities on the current topic of discussion. Some of the incidents must have attached themselves to his memory although the book and its author had passed from his mind. Starting from Perrault's poem, "Le Siècle de Louis le Grand," which is read before the assembled judges and becomes the subject of dispute, De Callières' book proceeds with the stock machinery of the double peaks of Parnassus, the marshalling of the opposing forces, the watering of steeds at Hippocrene, the intervention of *La Renommée*, much as Swift introduces Fame. The ancients have the greater unanimity as to their commander, which Swift, like their other defenders, claimed for them ; and, like De Callières, Swift uses the simile of auxiliary forces for the modern champions of antiquity. But when we have said this we have exhausted all possible points of comparison. The piece was not only unborrowed : it was diametrically opposed to De

whether such a person ever lived. Even Mr. Forster, who prided himself on having a unique copy of the book, also accepted, with implicit faith, the author's name. But the copy in his library at South Kensington gives no such name : and from it we can only trace the author, from a printer's advertisement at the end, as a *Monseigneur C * * **. But *Monsieur C * * ** is not Coutray, but François de Callières, the diplomatist and Academician ; and under his name, the very book which had eluded Mr. Forster's search appears in the British Museum Catalogue.

Callières' poor contribution to the stock dispute, which begins as it ends, with the commonplaces of critical compromise.¹ The *Battle of the Books* strikes an entirely different chord. Its object is satire, not criticism. Where it touches on the points in dispute, it is in such broad and far-reaching metaphor as that by which he illustrates the "sweetness and light" of the ancients through the fable of the Spider and the Bee, which has supplied a telling phraseology to a phase of latter-day criticism.² Like all the satire that Swift ever wrote, it goes directly to the point, by its personal reference. For Swift the main issue is one between Temple and Bentley, between the Christ Church wits and Wotton, not between the arguments of the critics. His preference for the ancients was thorough and sincere: but it went deeper than literary criticism. He preferred them because of their opposition to all the undiscipline of incompetent assumption, because of their freedom from all that moved his satire in ages nearer to his own. His abhorrence of that self-assertion which piques itself on originality because it knows no rule, lay at the very root of Swift's literary, as it did of his religious and moral, judgment.

But accidental as is Swift's real connexion with

¹ The contempt with which De Callières treats the barbarians of England is amusing. Along with some of the more obscure races, such as the Swedes, they are permitted to use the Latin tongue, as having neither literature nor polite language of their own.

² The phrase seems to have been taken from the advice to the pedant in Lucian's *Lexiphanes*: *Μάλιστα δὲ θύε Χάρισι καὶ Σαφηνείᾳ*, "Sacrifice chiefly to the Graces and to Perspicuity."

the Bentley and Boyle dispute, we cannot pass over the *Battle of the Books* without noticing the period it marks in Swift's literary advance. From this point the Pindarics and their kind were forsworn: and French literature, with which the controversy, probably through Temple's intervention, familiarized him, begins to have still more influence on his style. It would be difficult, indeed, to trace any connexion between the fierce and unruly genius of Swift, and the polished propriety of the French model: but in his careful rhymes, in his scrupulous lucidity, in his perfect subordination of a subject before he seeks to give it form and expression, in the strict limitation and definiteness of his aim, we have abundant proofs that this influence was not lost upon him. Of the two qualities whose union marks Swift's genius, intensity and lucidity, one at least was largely aided by the models which accident now made the subject of his studies for a time.

Much as there still was within himself to develop gloom, yet in great part the early burden of dependence, of poverty, of uncertain and misapplied powers, was now removed. It would scarcely be true to say of Swift, now or ever, that he found fully congenial work and threw himself into it with unreserved energies. There was always a cynical doubt about his own achievement, and a critical eye for its weaknesses and its perversity of aim. But the epoch of Pindaric Odes, and of strained addresses to patrons, had now passed away. If he still resented Dryden's sneering judgment, he nevertheless unconsciously

acted upon the truth that it contained. The almost passionate eagerness to find an utterance for his own strained feelings, all unmastered and unmeasured as they were, which had appeared so strongly in his early work : the overwrought metaphysical jargon which had expressed the turbulence of a mind not yet in possession of a meet organ of utterance : the following of false and unfit literary models—all these were now over for Swift. He had found at once the measure of men, and had acquired a consummate mastery over language. The time was coming when he was to postpone all other passions to that overmastering one of hatred and contempt, which, grievous as it might be to others, rent his own heart most of all. His poetry now acquired its new character. It was to be simply attired, to carry only the polished shaft of sarcasm or the deadly thrust of cynical irony, varied occasionally by trifles deftly handled. His power was to be shown there by the skill and lucidity of the expression : by the easy and contemptuous range, by the rigorous insight, by the concentrated strength and keenness of passion, but not by any pathetic appeals to the feelings.

But the quiet life at Moor Park, during which Swift's genius was growing and broadening amidst fairly healthful and peaceful surroundings, was now nearing its end. It was on the 27th of January, 16⁹⁹/₉₈, that Temple died : and the home at Moor Park was broken up.

For six months before, we are told,¹ Swift had

¹ Lyon's manuscript notes in Hawkesworth's *Life*.

kept, partly, it would seem, in French, a journal of Temple's illness, which, for some years, remained in his handwriting, with the title "*Journal d'Estat de Mr. Temple devant sa mort.*" The last entry in that journal ran thus: "He died at one o'clock this morning, the 27th of January, 16 $\frac{9}{8}$, and with him all that was good and amiable among men." There was no insincerity in the words. Their relations had not always been cordial: but it may well be that the earlier irksomeness of dependence, the complacency which had been often captious, and the abundant vanity of his patron, were wiped out, when the grave closed over him, by the memory of the duties and enjoyments of these later years. It was at Moor Park that the one chief affection of Swift's life, the love that clung to him till death, had begun to take shape. It was there he had first found ease; and there that after various trials he had at last found fit expression for the stern and devouring genius that must have an outlet or destroy its possessor.

To Swift, the will of Temple left little beyond¹ the doubtful privilege of editing his works. The provision was small and the duty was specially irksome. For some years Temple had been arranging, pruning, and correcting his works, as if they were monuments which posterity would never suffer to die. In this labour Swift had been associated, and perhaps had learned thereby that, however respectable as a diplomatist, Temple was not likely to be immortal as a

¹ One version of the autobiography says the amount of his legacy was £100; but the figure is afterwards scored through.

writer. For our own day, Temple's works have an interest, if only for the chaste quaintness of their style, and for the picture of a cultured gentleman of the period which they give. Here and there they have even a deeper interest as showing the view of Temple on important questions of policy: but however much these qualities may attract a student of the political ideas of the time, they are not sufficient to obtain a permanent fame. The works, however, which were issued in five volumes, at intervals of some years, seem to have been well received. The whole profit derived from the five volumes by Swift is reckoned by Mr. Forster at about six hundred pounds of present value.¹ If this was so it was more than Swift obtained for all his own works, scarcely one of which ever brought a profit to the author. But the editing of Temple's works lasted for nearly ten years. There were Memoirs, and Essays, and Miscellanies, and Letters, to be collated, and arranged, and brought out in separate, and fitly timed volumes. Finally Swift's duties as editor brought him into violent and public collision with Lady Giffard, who assumed the part of defender of her brother's reputation against the neglect of Swift.

The death of his patron left Swift to make his way

¹ The calculation of Mr. Forster is, however, of doubtful accuracy. He supposes the profit to have been £40 a volume. But the only authority for this is the following memorandum printed by Nichols from the original:

"*April* 14, 1709.—Then received of Mr. Benjamin Tooke the sum of forty pounds sterling, in full for the original copy of the third part of Sir William Temple's Memoirs. I say, received by me. Jon. Swift."

in the world absolutely alone.¹ At first he had some hopes from the promises of the King: but these hopes were doomed to disappointment. Swift entrusted his application to the care of one from whom many had suffered as Swift did,—to the Earl of Romney. With a right to notice as the brother of Algernon Sidney, Edward Sidney had been taken into the employment of the Prince of Orange, and by his tact and skill, if not by his abilities, had made himself one of the main movers in the Revolution. But his chances were lost,

¹ It was at this period that the following memorandum of resolutions, which fell into Mrs. Whiteway's hands on Swift's death, was written. It is interesting as showing how the self-discipline which Swift was now attempting, descended sometimes even to trifles in its self-analysis. The reader must interpret the memorandum in his own way.

WHEN I COME TO BE OLD. 1699.

Not to marry a young woman.

Not to keep young company, unless they really desire it.

Not to be peevish, or morose, or suspicious.

Not to scorn present ways, or wits, or fashions, or men, or war, etc.

Not to be fond of children, *or let them come near me hardly*.¹

Not to tell the same story over and over to the same people.

Not to be covetous.

Not to neglect decency or cleanliness, for fear of falling into nastiness.

Not to be over severe with young people, but give allowance for their youthful follies and weaknesses.

¹ The words "or let them come near me hardly" are erased, but they can easily be deciphered. Mr. Forster has given a facsimile of Swift's manuscript.

Not to be influenced by, or give ear to, knavish tattling servants, or others.

Not to be too free of advice, nor trouble any but those that desire it.

To conjure (altered to "desire") some good friends to inform me which of these resolutions I break or neglect, and wherein; and reform accordingly.

Not to talk much, nor of myself.

Not to boast of my former beauty, or strength, or favour with ladies, etc.

Not to hearken to flatteries, nor conceive I can be beloved by a young woman; *et eos qui hereditatem captant odisse ac vitare*.

Not to be positive or opinionative.

Not to set up for observing all these rules, for fear I should observe none.

and he was now a broken-down and purposeless profligate, who for years had never spent a sober day. Such was the man in whom Swift placed trust, and whose betrayal of that trust he never forgave. In the autobiography Romney is described as a "vicious, illiterate old rake": and in the notes by Swift on Macky's Remarks,¹ which chance has preserved, he is denied even honour and honesty; "he has not," says Swift, "a wheel to turn a mouse." The disappointment embittered Swift: the meddlesome officiousness, and the superficial courtliness, of the drunken favourite, exasperated him still more. He had nothing for it but to return to the country which he least wished ever to see again: and on the eve of his departure he prepared the first volume of Temple's Remains with a dedication to the King. But the reminder, when published in 1700, was in vain; and Swift had already returned to Ireland, the harbour to which so often and yet so unwillingly he was to come back in his greatest straits.

Swift went to Ireland in the summer of 1699, finding no better opening than that which now offered itself, to go as chaplain and secretary to Lord Berkeley, who, with Lord Galway and the Duke of Bolton, had been appointed one of the Lord-Justices.

At first all went smoothly. Swift accepted the post of chaplain, because that of secretary was

¹ The *Remarks on the Characters at the Court of Queen Anne*, published under the name of Macky, of whom we shall hear again in the days of Swift's political importance, were written by Davis, an officer in the Customs. Swift made some written notes on the volume, and these have been preserved.

joined to it : and the secretary dispensed favours and patronage. During the progress from Waterford to Dublin, Swift acted in that capacity, but when he got to Dublin, he found himself undermined. A man of the name of Bush had persuaded Lord Berkeley that a chaplain ought not to be secretary, and Swift was set aside. Berkeley made what amends he could. "He had felt himself bound to yield to the representations : but Church preferment would fall in soon, and Swift would have his choice." Swift was to learn, however, not for the first or last time, to put no trust in princes. The Deanery of Derry, one of the wealthiest in Ireland, did fall vacant. But Swift found another preferred on the ground of his own age being insufficient. Dr. Theophilus Bolton,¹ whom years after he speaks of in altogether new circumstances, as "born to be his tormentor," was appointed, and Swift was insulted when he remonstrated, by a suggestion that if he would stoop to simony and pay Bush a thousand guineas, the preferment might still be his. He turned upon the underling Bush in an outburst of anger : cursed both patron and agent for a couple of scoundrels,² and turned to his own weapons of revenge. Lord Berkeley was satirized in a few sting-

¹ Dr. Bolton was afterwards Chancellor of St. Patrick's. He ultimately became Archbishop of Cashel ; and the story of the dignitary who faithfully promised Swift before each prospective step that he would exchange his time-serving for patriotism when the full measure of his ambition was satisfied, has sometimes been referred to him.

² The story depends on the testimony of Sheridan, who must have spoken from distant hearsay. It leaves, therefore, some impression of exaggeration.

ing verses, where he and Bush were coupled together as "two whispering kings of Brentford." The chaplain had weapons in his hands that made him formidable, and so before six months were over, Swift had received, in February, $\frac{1700}{1699}$, the livings of Laracor, Agher, and Rathbeggan in Meath, worth in all a little over £200 a year.¹ He did not yet enter on possession; but his anger being somewhat appeased, he continued to live in the Castle, where, if we believe the story of Deane Swift, he once had a narrow escape from burning himself and the household, by reading in bed, and letting the candle set the bedclothes on fire, an accident which he had to keep from the knowledge of his hosts by disbursing some guineas of hush money. For the first time during this year of residence at the Castle, the brighter side of Swift's humour shone out at its best. All galling restraints were now left behind him. In playful verse, the manners of the housekeeper's room were painted in "*Mrs. Francis Harris's Petition on the loss of her Purse.*" The observation that has caught the slighter traits which make the picture so real, is the same which, with added bitterness, gave us long after the *Directions to Servants*. No contrast could be greater than that between the strained and

¹ In the Records at Armagh there is a petition from Swift to the Primate for a dispensation to hold Rathbeggan with Laracor and Agher, on the ground that "the income of the said benefices will be but a comfortable support for your petitioner, and encourage his residence, and due performance of his duty." The petition was referred to the Bishop of Meath on 5th of March, reported on favourably on the 6th, and the faculty granted for a composition of £20 on the 9th.

stilted style of the Pindarics and the skill with which Swift, by his literary instinct, fastens our interest on a subject trivial in itself. But the right note once struck, Swift preserves it to the end in all his lighter poems. Above the servants' hall, the drawing-room too was depicted: the earl dealing round the cards and overdoing, in his fussy nervousness, the part of a careworn politician: her ladyship holding the stakes, and dropping to sleep over her cards and her snuff: poor Biddy Floyd, the companion, wisely cautious of her pence, and indulging in the mildest gambling with much timidity. "Parson Swift" was the chartered satirist of the company: his ribaldry condoned, perhaps because it could not be resisted. Amongst the ladies of the family his influence was supreme: from poor Lady Berkeley, whose pious love of sermons he deluded with his *Meditation on a Broomstick*, to Lady Mary and Lady Betty, the latter of whom¹ was his soundest and most wholesome and straightforward correspondent thirty years further on; and poor little Penelope, who died in the Castle, and whose memory was fresh enough with Swift, more than a generation later, to make him bestir himself to write an epitaph for her tomb in one of the Dublin churches.

Swift's licence of tongue and pen, as yet for the most part jocular, was certainly never resented here. Still living at the Castle, he gained, in the autumn of 1700, a small addition to his income, in the Prebend of Dunlaven, in St. Patrick's, which was

¹ Afterwards Lady Betty Germain of Drayton.

given him by Narcissus Marsh, then Archbishop of Dublin. In February, 1701, he took his Doctor's degree in Dublin University. Thus when Lord Berkeley's short period of office came to a close in April, 1701, and when Swift accompanied him back to England, he had secured for himself, not indeed valuable preferment, but yet something which gave at least independence and position. Before he returned, however, he found it needful to put a period to an almost forgotten love-passage. His rising prospects had apparently created a new interest in his former mistress: she wrote to ask about his preferments: probably to expostulate with what seemed to be fickleness on his part. In reply he wrote to her, from Dublin Castle, a letter such as few men would have written even if they could: such as scarcely any other could have written, even if they would. It is hopeless for any biographical leniency to defend its tone: it is equally impossible to deny that it is characteristic. But we need not take it as a studied sarcasm, intended to announce to the lady that if she came unvalued, unhonoured, and on sufferance, she might share the lot of Swift. It is simpler, and agrees better with what we know of Swift, to take it as an unsparing and literal version of the relation that he felt must subsist between them. For much he had valued, had respected, had even borne an affection for her; but she had wounded what was most susceptible about him, his intense and self-centred pride. He had striven to break her from her surroundings: she had not yielded to his per-

suation. Where he had expostulated she had argued. He had for a time taken her manner "only as a thing put on as necessary before a lover": but he had at last found it to be based on a severe indifference. The air of opposition which she had assumed would, he knew well, end only in misery to them both: better be quit of the whole affair at once. As to their material prospects, his own experience had been too severe to allow him to gloze over what he knew to be important: he doubts her ability to be a poor man's wife, to check her fancies, to mould herself to his moods, to be content with a quiet life: to find, in short, "the place wherever her husband was thrown, to be more welcome than courts and cities without him." But if she can fairly look all this in the face, and accept the lot he has to offer her, he is content to take her "without regarding whether her person be beautiful, or her fortune large."

Rarely, indeed, has such a letter been written to any woman: never, perhaps, except by Swift, without a refinement of sarcastic insult that would be simply brutal. But with him, it is the natural outcome of a temperament and an intellectual faculty equally strange. He had at once a singular insight and a singular blindness. He was keen, even to morbidity, in foreseeing and laying bare the motives of action: the same passionate intensity that gave strength to his satire, gave force and clearness to an analysis, pitiless alike to himself and to his mistress. He simply expresses with an unsparing truthfulness,

what he believes to be the case between the two : and there he leaves it. On the other hand, he shows here, what he showed throughout, that blindness to the ordinary feelings that stir human nature, which makes him unable beforehand to gauge the effect of his words. Morbid in his analysis of motives, he is equally morbid in his imperviousness to sympathy with feelings. Once stirred he can love deeply, faithfully, permanently : but till the stirring comes, he is dead to the thrills that pass over others. He can lay bare and probe the nerves as they are seen in the dissecting-room : he can feel, too, the living thrill as it passes through himself : but of the feeling that passes in another, and that his own words may stir, he is, not purposely careless, but absolutely unconscious.

The letter written to Miss Waring could have but one result : if she had any spark of pride its insults would repel her : if all pride was so wanting, as to make her stoop to its terms, she would still have been terrified by the prospect it opened to her.

The chapter in Swift's life, thus closed, was not without its future effect. The warnings he gave to the lady he doubtless took also to himself : and they kept fresh in his own mind the danger of an imprudent marriage, from which he had saved himself and her. The folly and the recklessness of such a marriage, with its probabilities of slatternly and degrading dependence, were the more impressed on his mind by the marriage into which his only sister, Jane Swift, now entered. He and she stood alone

amongst the kinship, and Swift had suffered dependence too long to let him forget how easily it might again come over them, how readily they might fall into the degrading position of poor relations. With a nervous dread he foresaw these possible evils, and he had no sympathy with the moral commonplaces by which many men of less real fortitude might comfort themselves for circumstances of inferiority and contempt. His sister married a man named Fenton, a currier in Bride Street. The locality in itself proves him to have been moving in respectable circles in Dublin. He had been a student at Trinity College:¹ and had then, it would seem, entered upon a well-to-do business already founded. But something in the man himself roused Swift's suspicions. He violently opposed the match, foreseeing from it nothing good: and his fears were realized. His sister was lost to him, and Swift refused to allow himself ever to resume ties which he had once deliberately broken. Her husband died a bankrupt, and left his widow to poverty: and till her death, seven years before Swift's own, she was supported by his bounty. He did not shirk the duty: but, with his usual self-torture, he refused himself the boon of personal affection for the one really close relation that he possessed.

On his return to England with Lord Berkeley, in April, 1701, Swift found awaiting him a scene stirring

¹ For this fact I am indebted to Mr. Carroll, of St. Bride's, Dublin, to whose topographical information I have already expressed my obligation.

enough. The year 1700 had been filled with events most critical for the future both of English independence, and of the English Constitution. At its beginning had been arranged the second Treaty of Partition, by which it was hoped some limit might be placed on the encroachments of France. These encroachments were dreaded not by one party only, but by the prudent men of all parties. But stronger even than dread, was the excited virulence of party feeling. In April, a session of almost unexampled bitterness came to a conclusion. The Tory party was in the ascendant: but it was a party swelled by the Jacobite, the political adventurer, and the hireling of France. The zeal of this motley party had been excited by the Report of the Commissioners on the forfeited Irish estates. The Report showed that grants, lavish in amount and dangerous in principle, had been granted to William's Dutch favourites. The resumption of these grants was pressed with the most virulent eagerness. At first a party struggle, this soon became a fight between the two Houses: the House of Lords resisted the furious Toryism now rampant in the Commons, to the very verge of a collision which could have ended only in civil war. The Resumption Bill was carried: William was insulted in the sorest point: he parted with the Commons in a mood that augured new disputes the next winter. During the summer, tensivity was added to the already strained public feeling by the death of the young Duke of Gloucester, the only surviving son of the Princess Anne. The crown of England

was one step nearer to the succession of a foreign line. Whatever prudent men might feel, the prospects of maintaining the Revolution settlement stood very low with the mass of the nation.

William, unwilling as he was to make terms with a party whose ruling passion he knew to be detestation for himself and his rule, was forced to yield to the popular prejudice. Early in spring, Somers, the Whig whose talents were most commanding and whose character stood highest, had been dismissed from the post of Lord Chancellor. In December, Swift's patron, Lord Berkeley, was superseded, with his brother Lord-Justices, by the Earl of Rochester, who only waited till he had arranged a Tory Ministry before coming over to assume the government of Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant in the spring of 1701. Popular feeling did not moderate during the winter: and in February, 170 $\frac{1}{6}$, a Parliament was elected more distinctively Tory than ever. Robert Harley, the chief of that party, was elected Speaker. The political events in opposition to which Swift made his first important appearance as an author, were directed by one who afterwards became his chief patron, and who commanded his most devoted attachment.

Swift accompanied Lord Berkeley to England in April, 1701. The new Parliament had already entered on its work of vengeance. Not content with the resumption of the Irish estates, the dismissal of Somers, the reconstitution of the Ministry, the reduction of the army, the Tory party still pressed for more. The Partition Treaty was unpopular: scandal was busy

against the late Ministers : it was resolved to proceed by way of impeachment against Lord Somers, William's wisest adviser, against the Earl of Portland, his oldest and most trusted friend, against the Earl of Orford, the most stubborn and unmanageable of Whigs : and against the newly-created Lord Halifax, who as Charles Montagu, had been the literary friend and coadjutor of Matthew Prior, and now, as a peer, was the rising hope of the Whig party. The House of Lords resented the impeachments : and a collision between the Houses was prevented only by a sudden prorogation, leaving the two parties ready, as occasion offered, to spring at one another's throats. Such was the juncture which called forth Swift's first political tract, *On the Dissensions at Athens and Rome*, which stands alone as marking his formal connexion with the Whigs.

Already, in Ireland, Swift had talked with Lord Berkeley of the violent outburst of party rage, and it was at Berkeley's suggestion that he undertook the pamphlet, in which he draws a lesson for his own day from the violent outbursts by which Athens and Rome made shipwreck of their liberties. He came over in April, with the plan of the pamphlet in his head : stayed, as usual, with his mother at Leicester, on his way to London : and remained in London from May till September, leaving just after he had launched this first venture, anonymously, on the world.

The pamphlet, interesting though it is, as Swift's first political work, need not delay us long. It was

Swift's first and only effort on the Whig side. The peers attacked by the Commons' impeachments are pictured under prominent names in Athenian history, of men who fell victims to popular rage, and the ill-usage of whom recoiled upon the heads of those who wrought it. The tract was a blow struck for Somers and his companions; as such it was intended by Swift, and as such it was received by them. But, though written on the Whig side, it fixed him to no distinctively Whiggish principles. Of opinions on Church affairs it contains absolutely nothing; and yet his opinions on Church affairs eventually fixed, far more than anything else, Swift's place in politics. What the author of the tract dreads most, is what he calls *dominatio plebis*. Of possible evils what he dreads least, is the tyranny of one. What he maintains to be most necessary to safe government, is a balance between the different parts of the nation: and this theory of political balance all political parties and most political writers in that day advocated. On one point he is perfectly distinct, and absolutely consistent with the opinions which he expressed from the beginning to the end of his career. He winds up his argument by a protest against party government: and that protest was one he never missed an opportunity of making, as long as he lived.

“Because Clodius and Curio happen to agree with me in a few singular notions, must I therefore blindly follow them in all? . . . Is it not possible that upon some occasion Clodius may be bold and insolent, borne away by his passion, malicious and revengeful? That Curio may be corrupt, and expose to sale his tongue and his pen? I conceive it far below the dignity of

human nature and human reason, to be engaged in any party, the most plausible soever, upon such servile conditions."

Careful as the pamphlet is, it wants, in all but one or two isolated passages, the force and the humour with which Swift usually invests the dry bones of a forgotten dispute. It is the work of a hand new to that art in which it was eventually to distance all competitors. The elaborate theorizing with which the pamphlet begins, is strangely unlike Swift: and the classical parallels are paraded with something of pedantry. But the current taste of the day must not be forgotten. Abstract political theories were so popular that less than a dozen years before, the Convention Parliament had consummated a Revolution by voting that the Original Contract, a figment of which it pleased political theorists to talk much, had been violated. Fanciful as Swift's classical parallels appear, we must remember also that classical allusions were much prized by the literary cliques of the day, and that these literary cliques had a good deal to do with moulding political controversy. From whatever cause, the tract produced a strong and immediate effect. Its coolness and calmness of tone came in striking contrast to the excitement of the party struggle. The disguised allusions, and the far-off parallels, allowed all the more freedom of treatment; yet it was not hard for contemporaries to apply them to current affairs. The pamphlet was much handed about. Men so prominent as Somers, and Burnet—Swift's inveterate foe of later days,—were spoken of as its authors. Its claim to popularity

was enhanced by the current of events. On the 17th of September James II. died at St. Germain: and Louis XIV. was infatuated enough to rouse the people of England into a frenzy of excitement by recognizing the Pretender. Lately in hazard of his throne, William was now hailed as the one possible saviour of the nation. From being a triumphant and patriotic party, the Tories found themselves a discredited faction, tainted with treason. It was to this that their "Dissensions" had led: so nearly had our Athens come to be the slave of a modern Xerxes. Swift found himself in the pleasantest of all positions, that of a successful prophet. A month more made the same views triumphant at the polling booths in November, 1701.

The story of the authorship soon crept out. According to one, and that apparently Swift's own, account, the avowal took place in Ireland. In a company where Swift was present, Bishop Sheridan of Kilmore,¹ the only non-juring bishop whom Ireland produced, was ascribing the pamphlet, according to current report, to the Bishop of Sarum. It is scarcely likely that under such a name, it could have proved very palatable to Dr. Sheridan: but the reference was at least sufficiently respectful to tempt Swift first to doubt Burnet's authorship, and finally when challenged as "a positive young man" for his doubts,

¹ The degree of relationship between this bishop and Swift's later friend, the father of his biographer, and the grandfather of the more famous dramatist, is uncertain. The bishop was the son of the Sheridan of Kilmore, who was a converted Roman Catholic priest, and in whose house Bishop Bedell died in 1641.

to announce his own responsibility for the paper. The avowal of authorship, however made, procured for Swift the countenance and friendship of Somers, of Burnet, and of other leaders of the Whigs.¹ As for his own opinions, it was now, he says,² that for the first time he began to trouble himself with Whig or Tory; and his adherence to the former was weakened by misgivings as to their allegiance to the Church.

But the visit to England from April to September in 1701, was eventful to Swift for other reasons than the appearance of this tract. During that visit, he completed a further instalment of his task in editing Sir William Temple's Remains: and, perhaps through the occasion which their appearance offered, he had a new interview with William III. The King was now fast failing in health, and nearing the end of that tangled task which had been his in English politics. William seems to have taken counsel with Swift in the midst of that rancorous faction which assailed him, and the real bearings of which he was never able to fathom. Swift could only comfort him by showing that politics in Ireland were of a milder description. "When I was last in England," he says, "I told the

¹ "My Lords Somers and Halifax, as well as the bishop (of Salisbury), desired my acquaintance with great marks of esteem and professions of kindness. . . . They were very liberal in promising me the greatest preferments I could hope for, if ever it came in their power . . . I grew domestic with Lord Halifax, and was as often with Lord Somers as the formality of his nature (the only unconvertible fault he had) made it agreeable to me."—*Memoirs Relating to the Change in the Queen's Ministry in 1710.*

² *Ibid.*

King that the highest Tories we had with us in Ireland, would make tolerable Whigs in England.”¹ The reason was not far to seek: in Ireland the memory of Tyrconnel and his wild Irishmen was in 1701 too recent to allow of any tampering with principles that might end in Jacobitism.

The same visit was marked by another event of still eloser biographical interest. Since the death of Temple, Esther Johnson had lingered with her mother and sister at Farnham, where the household at Moor Park and its offshoots were under the somewhat Draconian dominion of Lady Giffard. Stella had been left a small legacy by Temple: and part at least of that legacy consisted of a farm in Ireland. Her fortune was not more than about £1500: and to live with independence she must seek for the highest rate of interest and the cheapest place of living. Ireland seemed to offer what was wanted. This gave some reason for Stella's change of residence; Swift's persuasion, which determined it, clearly rested on grounds that were more decisive of the future lot of both. Swift and Stella were already linked by reverence and admiration on one side: on the other by protection and guidance, sought and given. Absence had only confirmed the impression: and now Swift gladly seized any excuse to bring Stella near him. He avows that the change, reasonable as it was, “was also very much for my own satisfaction.” Swift knew

¹ *Letter Concerning the Sacramental Test.* This was written in 1708: and as Swift had then visited England more than once since the King's death, the expression must refer to his last visit during the life of the King.

that if he was to keep her all his own, he must place her where he might watch over and protect her. For the future, under whatever painful and mysterious condition, their lots were to be joined. With Stella came Mistress Rebecca Dingley, who had lived with her in England, and who remained with her till Stella's death. She had no real hold on the society which gathered round Stella's home, but was treated nevertheless, both by Swift and others, with a studied civility that helped to avert the scandal of Dublin gossips. The ladies came over before Swift: they settled in Ireland while he was still in London: and from the first they practised a caution in regard to appearances that would seem overstrained, did we not remember that pride which made Swift resolve to secure both himself and Stella against the slightest breath of scandal.¹ Such censure as did arise soon wore off, helped in its passage by that ever watchful prudence which, at Swift's suggestion, she was careful to maintain. The relation between the two was from the first, so far as the world was concerned, free from all doubt or ambiguity. Stella shared all Swift's interests, remained his constant companion, by degrees became the centre of his circle. But they never met alone: they never lived in the same house: and though all his thoughts and cares were shared by her, the bond was never in reality a closer one. Even slander was silent except for some vulgar outbursts

¹ We may suppose that it was about this time that Esther Johnson's mother became the wife of Mr. Mose, who had been Temple's steward. The marriage would increase Stella's desire to have a home of her own.

which forgot even appropriateness of attack. Strange and abnormal as were its conditions, fettered and cramped as it was by Swift's pride and waywardness, or by the mysteries of disease, the romance of that mutual devotion yet forms one of the threads of deepest interest running through Swift's dark and sombre life.

CHAPTER IV

SWIFT AMID THE PARTY STRUGGLE OF THE FIRST YEARS OF QUEEN ANNE—"THE TALE OF A TUB"

1701-1704

ÆTAT. 34-37

Swift's political conduct—His home at Laracor, and its surroundings—The death of William III.—Change in the Ministry—The Tories in power—Disaffection of the extreme Tories—Prospects of the Whigs—Difficulties of Swift's position—Bill against Occasional Conformity—The struggle in Convocation—Extreme Tories further estranged—Rochester dismissed—Ormond's Irish Government—The Test Act in Ireland—Ecclesiastical legislation by the Irish Parliament—Bill against Occasional Conformity revived in England—Swift's view of it—His uneasy relations with the Whigs—The extreme Tories part from the Government—*The Tale of a Tub*—Its aim and meaning—The arrangement of the book—Its view of humanity—Comparison with *Hudibras*—The plot of the Tale—Irreverence of its allusions—The meaning of Swift's irreverence—Sources of suggestion for the book—Its reception—Question of authorship—Stella and Dr. William Tisdall.

It is the business of this chapter to trace the growth of Swift's opinions at a very critical period in his career: to follow his movements between England and Ireland during these years when his early fame was establishing itself: to watch how current events

were affecting him : and how, step by step, he was being drawn into the vortex of party struggle raging on both sides of the Channel. No accusation has been more pertinaciously brought against Swift than that of political inconsistency, and no higher motive than that of self-interest has been assigned for it. Before we admit the truth of the charge, it is at least fair to inquire what was the course of the party struggle. We may leave the facts to prove his honesty : and in the present chapter it is the earlier phase of the struggle into which Swift was eventually drawn so deeply, that opens itself to our view.

As a converse to this, we must turn to the quiet life at Laracor. Swift followed Esther Johnson back to Ireland in September, 1701 : and now entered on the duties of a charge which was scarcely in itself an inviting one.

The church which formed the centre of his somewhat scattered parish, is about a mile and a half from the town of Trim, in Meath. Then, as now, it was surrounded by the houses of some gentlemen of property : but so slight was the hold of the Church upon the bulk of the population that Swift seldom ministered to a congregation of more than half a score in all ; as he says, "most gentle and all simple."¹ Trim itself, in its castle, its fifteenth century church, the "Yellow Steeple" of its ruined abbey, had memorials of its early importance. It was now the centre of a busy and important Protestant

¹ See Letter to Archbishop King, Jan. 6, 1708 : and another to Dean Sterne, April 17, 1710.

population, amidst a surrounding sea of Roman Catholicism.

When Swift came to Laracor it was to find not only a decayed flock, but a ruined parsonage and a dilapidated church.¹ The aspect of the place remains much as it must have been when, according to the popular tradition, he walked down to his new charge and astonished the curate and his wife by the assumed harshness of his manner, which was presently to change, when he had sufficiently tried the humility of the man, into an easy consideration.² Running southwards from Trim, the road passes through a flat country, until, after a mile and a half, it comes to a slight rising where it crosses the Boyne and reaches the site of Swift's parsonage and of the little church. Of the church as it stood in Swift's time not a vestige remains. But it was thrown down only about thirty or forty years ago, and its entire simplicity is fresh in the memory of many. Through

¹ The income he derived from Laracor and the associated charges of Agher, Dunlavan, and Rathbeggan, amounted to about £244 a year. From his account book for 1708, we may gather so much of the particulars of that year's income.

² The story may be true or not, and undoubtedly it bears some resemblance to those by which tradition has rather illustrated the impression of Swift's manner than helped us to the facts of his life. Scott accepts it: Mr. Forster doubts its authenticity; and its authority is no better than the gossipy volumes of *Swiftiana* which Wilson compiled about the beginning of this century. The lines which Scott quotes in connexion with his journey to Laracor—

“Dublin for a city, Dunshaughlin for a plough,
Navan for a market, Arbracken for a cow:
Kells for an old town, Virginia poor,
Cavan for dirt,” etc.—

clearly refer to some journey northwards, and are inapplicable to any route which Swift could possibly have taken to Laracor.

a small vestry on the north side, one passed at once into the pulpit, below which was the reading-desk of Roger, the clerk.¹ Pulpit and desk stood midway between the east and west ends of the church, and the rude communion-table, of crescent shape, is still shown to visitors at St. Patrick's in Dublin, as "Swift's writing-table." On the other side of the road and at some distance from the church stands a little farm homestead occupying the site of the parsonage that Swift built for himself. Of the house there stands only a considerable fragment of strong masonry, in the shape of a wall built for shelter against the northern winds. Enough remains to show that Swift built his house of a solidity that might have been expected to prevent for some generations dilapidations such as he had found. Round the house stood the garden (now a potato field) of which Swift was so proud. It now stands on higher ground than the surrounding fields, and it might seem hard to account for the fears that Swift expresses in his *Journal to Stella*, lest a sudden rising of the river might flood it. But not long ago the present occupant, in digging some depth below the surface, came upon a garden wall, whose foundation was seven or eight feet below the present surface of the ground. This would seem to have been a fruit wall built by Swift to catch the southern sun, and stretching from the gable of his

¹ Of whom Lord Orrery tells the story (which Scott thinks is more likely to be true of Swift than to have been invented by Orrery), that when the solitary member of the congregation, he found himself addressed, "Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth you and me."

house to the garden hedge.¹ At the end of the garden one can still trace the carefully-built sides of his fishpond, of which he speaks to Stella. In a field just beyond, the willows that he cherished grew till a few years ago, by the bank of the river Knightsbrooke, and almost within a stone's throw of the house. More close to the house and under a tree that almost overhangs the road, there is a well, which the country folk still call by the name of "the Dean's Cellar."

This was now Swift's home in Ireland: and he occupied it during these years more than at any later time. There was a still stronger tie to it. In this neighbourhood Stella had fixed her home. Twice only, once for a few months in 1705, and again in the winter of 1707-8, she returned to England: but came back to end her life in Ireland. When Swift was absent from the vicarage, it was occupied by Stella and her companion, Rebecca Dingley: when he was at home, she retired to the house of Dr. Raymond of Trim, or to a lodging that is still pointed out, with traditionary reverence, if not with accuracy, in that town.

We know nothing of the incidents of Swift's residence at Laracor in 1702, from which he was probably glad to escape to London to reap the growing favour which his pamphlet had procured for him. He returned to England in April, 1702.

¹ He had a fancy for such walls: and Mrs. Pilkington tells us a story of one he had built in the Deanery garden at St. Patrick's, and of the care he spent to secure the solidity of its construction.

There he found a changed atmosphere. The election of November had completely overturned the Tories. But the triumph of the Whigs was a short one. On the 8th of March, the King had died : and his death had been the signal for a revival of Tory hopes under new conditions.

During the three months that followed the King's death, the Ministry was reconstituted in a way to correspond with the known feelings of Queen Anne. Lord Godolphin was named Lord Treasurer : and as yet Godolphin was to be classed as a Tory. Lord Nottingham, the solemn adherent of the most sombre of ecclesiastical parties, was made Secretary of State : and the Marquis of Normanby¹ was created Duke of Buckingham, and named Lord Privy Seal. The Earl of Pembroke, whose moderation roused the antipathy of no party, and whose character gained him the respect of all, was made Lord President. Sir Simon Harcourt was Attorney-General, and even Jack Howe, the notorious member for Gloucestershire, whose Jacobitism had carried him to the verge of treason, gained a subordinate post. In a Government so constituted there might seem to be almost every element of Toryism represented. But it had one point of contact with the Whigs, opposed to them as in the main it was. To Marlborough, the dominating spirit in the Government, before whom all its other elements bent, the war was more than all other political prin-

¹ This was John Sheffield, who as Earl of Mulgrave had written the poetical essays on Satire and on Poetry, and whose latitudinarian epitaph in Westminster Abbey is so well known.

ciples put together : and ere long he was sure to find that he could rely on most support for a war policy from the Whigs.

The fact, then, that his friends the Whigs were for the moment worsted, did not put an end to Swift's hopes. The germ of the Revolution settlement was Whig : and sooner or later the working out of the Revolution must bring the Whigs to power. But other causes came to break the security of his attachment to that party, and with this came the real difficulty of the part he had to play. Strive as he might, it was for Swift impossible to accept his opinions entirely from the current maxims of either party : and there was one point which seemed to show itself in the programme of the Whigs, to which he could not bring himself to bend. As soon as his suspicions of Whig sincerity to the Church were aroused, his allegiance to the Whig party was gone : and these suspicions were already being stirred. He had hesitated to take orders : but having become a clergyman, he considered himself bound in honour to fight for the privileges of the Church. To these privileges, rightly or wrongly, he attached great value as ensuring the independence, and the calmness of judgment necessary for the dignity of the Church, and as securing her against all appeals to popular prejudice—appeals which, in any sphere, but above all in that of religion, Swift's nature most abhorred. He was, indeed, no advocate of priestly assumption. But in all the range of human folly, he most despised and hated the hypocrisy of the fanatic on the one hand,

and the complacent sprightliness of the sceptic on the other: and both, he believed, might best be avoided by a strict maintenance of the political charter of the Church. But this was precisely the point where Swift diverged not only from the practical tenets, but from the whole tone of thought, of the Whigs: and it was precisely the point which was most insisted upon by the Whigs, as they gradually recovered power. The steps of the divergence we have now to see.

Swift spent six months in England, and in October, 1702, returned to Ireland, where he remained till November, 1703. During this year the questions between the two parties were rapidly developing. In the autumn of 1702 a new election resulted in a Tory majority. The Ministry found themselves compelled to take up the Bill against Occasional Conformity,¹ intended to close to Dissenters that loophole of escape from civil disabilities, afforded to consciences not too sensitive to bow the knee now and then in the Temple of Rimmon. The Bill was pressed forward by a new champion of the Church. This was young Henry St. John, who had suffered in youth from the burdensome education of a Dissenting home,² and who now avenged himself on the tormentors of his boyhood by giving such time as he could spare from debauchery, to the hunting down of the Dissenters.

¹ Occasional Conformity provided a strange salve for tender consciences by allowing Dissenters to qualify for civil posts, by taking the communion according to the Church of England, on rare or single occasions.

² Bolingbroke's complaint of his boyhood's task of reading from Dr. Manton's folio of 119 sermons on the 119th Psalm, is well known.

The Bill was passed with much enthusiasm by the Commons. But in the Lords the support of Marlborough and Godolphin was forced and unwilling, and there the Bill was delayed and finally stopped for the session.

In another arena, more exclusively ecclesiastical, the same sort of wrangling was going on. The Upper and Lower Houses of Convocation so far corresponded in their shades of political feeling to the secular Houses of Parliament. The bishops appointed since the Revolution were Low Churchmen: the clergy of the Lower House were imbued with the current High Church notions. There was one amongst them who took the lead for virulence, activity, and controversial skill. Francis Atterbury, who became at a later day the friend and intimate of Swift, vastly different as was the range of feeling in the two men, was now rising quickly in popularity. As Preacher at St. Bride's he had acquired the leading place amongst the pulpit orators of the day, and now appeared in Convocation as Archdeacon of Totnes and the leader of the High Churchmen. He was known as the author of a *Vindication of the Rights of Convocation*, of which rights he was afterwards the main champion. With Swift he must already have come into some contact as the chief author of the reply of Boyle to Bentley, one item in the controversy of which the *Battle of the Books* is the most enduring monument. There is no Churchman of the day whose virtues as well as faults stand out in lineaments so clearly marked as those of Atterbury.

From his college days we find him restless, ambitious, even turbulent.¹ When he makes his way, impatient of college life, to London, it is to appear in all the attractive glitter of a popular preacher, bustling and energetic, vain even in the fashion of his outward man : but nevertheless with a redeeming background of strongly-kindled enthusiasm, that spreads its rays over his whole life. Other scenes will bring him into closer contact with Swift, some of whose opinions he travesties by exaggeration : now we see him only at the outset of a struggle in which, bating his exaggeration, he must have commanded not a little sympathy from Swift.

In Ireland the Ministry equally failed to conciliate either party. Early in 1703 the Duke of Ormond was appointed Lord-Lieutenant in place of Rochester. In September Parliament met, but its session only aggravated party feeling. The Whigs pressed a new Bill for Preventing the Growth of Popery, but the Tories managed to pass it in the form of a Test Act, which bore heavily on the Protestant Dissenters. The session left Tory and Whig, Churchman and Dissenter, more opposed than ever.

When Swift came back to England in November, 1703, the strength of parties was being tested by the

¹ "I know not what to think of your uneasiness," says his father to him. "It shows unlike a Christian, and savours neither of temper nor consideration. I am troubled to remember it is habitual. . . . You make your friends and yourself uneasy : cannot trust Providence. Do your duty and serve God in your station."—*Lewis Atterbury to his son*, Nov. 1, 1690. The words are strangely prophetic of the bishop's subsequent career of ardent combat, and of baffled conspiracy.

renewed effort to push on the Bill against Occasional Conformity. The speech from the throne, in words which conveyed a clear allusion to the Bill, had urged that unanimity might as far as possible be allowed to prevail, in view of the dangers that threatened the kingdom abroad. It was more than guessed that this warning proceeded from the dislike which Marlborough and Godolphin both entertained to the Bill, nominally introduced under their sanction, as likely to promote disunion and so hinder their paramount object. But their influence was not strong enough to prevent the Bill being pressed rapidly through the House of Commons. It was sent to the Lords and there fiercely debated. A small majority again threw it out: and by a strange hypocrisy Marlborough and Godolphin joined in the protest against the rejection of a Bill which they heartily disliked, which they voted for only because they saw no means of refusing, and which their colleagues pressed for contrary to their entreaties and advice.

We know what the tendency of Swift's mind was on this subject. His dislike to the Dissenters, as fanatics, was consistent in its intensity throughout his life, though it varied from the bitterness of contempt to that of open hostility. We know from the *Tale of a Tub*, now receiving its latest touches, that the Occasional Conformity of the Dissenters was the object of his contempt and ridicule.¹ We know that

¹ In section xi. of the *Tale* we are told how Jack got upon a great horse and ate custard. The sentence refers to a notable

even if he was ready at this time to tolerate the device, it could only be from his opinion that conspicuous hypocrisy weakened the cause of its professors, and that Occasional Conformity would soon make Dissent ridiculous. At a later time his dislike grew so bitter that he would tolerate no half measures, even though they might promise results like these. But at present he is against the Bill for preventing Occasional Conformity. He is disgusted with the whole struggle, which he describes as the "highest and warmest reign of party." He can only turn it to ridicule. The very dogs in the street are more contumelious and quarrelsome than usual: a committee of Whig and Tory cats has been making night hideous on his roof: and the very ladies are so eaten up with their zeal for religion, that they cannot find time to say their prayers.¹ But he leaves us no room to doubt that his views on it were formed chiefly in the company of Whig politicians. Peterborough, Somers and Burnet are those whom he quotes, as proving by their support that the Bill was not really for the benefit of the Church. He went so far indeed as to write against the Bill: though in so half-hearted a way that the pamphlet, unlike most of those he wrote, was too late for the purpose it was to serve.²

Swift would not break with the Whigs as yet, but his position was not a comfortable one. His friends

result of Occasional Conformity, when Sir Humphrey Edwyn, a Presbyterian Lord Mayor, ostentatiously went with his insignia of office to the Conventicle.

¹ *Swift to Dr. Tisdall*, Dec. 16, 1703.

² *Swift to Dr. Tisdall*, Feb. 3, 170 $\frac{1}{2}$.

the Whigs might have fair prospects, but they were still out in the cold. They were the "best friends in nature." But they wanted, so he tells us, "the little circumstance of power and favour."¹ The civility of a cast courtier was proverbially cheap. But worse than this, he doubted how far his principles would allow him to follow them. He was uneasy and vexed with himself. The jarrings of party displeased him at any time: but it is clear that in 1704 Swift was equally out of joint in his relations with one party and the other. He had no thought of a sudden change, or indeed as yet of any change at all; but there were plenty of doubts to unsettle his allegiance: and Swift was beginning to feel himself unfit to be a submissive Whig. The ever-recurring suggestion again came back to him; should he go back "to speculation and study," and wait for a change of scene? He was in a position in which any false move, any factious action, any deliberate injury to his Church, by one party, might drive him permanently into the arms of the other.

In May, 1704, after the close of the session, he left England for the restful scene of Laracor, and for that companionship from which all political thoughts were banished. There he knew he could find interest in all his hopes, and a patience that would wait till his ambition ripened. He went back to Laracor in June, 1704, unsettled, indeed, but still nominally the adherent of a party whose hopes were not high, and of whose tenets he was beginning to have some doubts.

¹ *Swift to Dr. Tisdall*, Dec. 16, 1703.

So much for the honesty of his political principles thus far.

Before he left London Swift had taken a step decisive, indeed, for his fame, but which prudence might have told him would endanger his future prospects in the Church. But prudence was a virtue to which Swift had little claim: and even had its warning been stronger it might not have stopped the issue of that which was to be in some respects the most typical product of his genius. The *Tale of a Tub* had been lying by him now for about seven years. It received his final touches, and was this year published, anonymously, along with the *Battle of the Books*, and a shorter *Discourse on the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*. If the *Battle of the Books* had been transcribed and handed about amongst Temple's friends, its authorship could hardly have been quite unknown: and the joint issue of the two must surely, to a small circle of readers, have suggested Swift as the author of both. From whatever reason, or by whatever means, however, that authorship was, to the public, carefully concealed.

To discover the meaning of the book which has stirred minds so widely diverse as this has, which rests upon foundations so simple and yet so unquestionably broad and strong, and in which each generation has found novelty and variety, we need not judge too minutely the lights and shades of the satire, or ask ourselves how and when this or that touch was added. During these early years we have seen that Swift held on certain leading points

opinions different from those with which he is chiefly associated. We may suggest various explanations of these early views: how Swift may have despised the Dissenters too much to notice them: or may have hesitated as to the best policy to be pursued in order to meet them: or may have felt himself bound by party ties to moderation. But in the *Tale of a Tub* we have no mere phase of opinion varying by mood and circumstance: we have the real and permanent thoughts of the man, apart from all the dress of conventional opinion and party bias. No one will pretend to say that the *Tale of a Tub* might not, in all its essential parts, have been written when Swift was in close alliance with the Tories, just as well as when he was a professed Whig. It is because it expresses with such absolute and even reckless freedom, the whole range of the author's mind, because it plays so easily round all subjects of human interest, that the elasticity of its humour has moved each generation, and retains its hold upon us now with all the freshness and vivacity of youth. It has abundance of faults. It is digressive, and occasionally diffuse: it has many mannerisms, and its humorous dress is of an antiquated, to some, it may seem, even an artificial, fashion. There is no graphic or dramatic interest to sustain the reader. It is often obscure, and some of its effects are due to topics which to us have no more than antiquarian interest. But all these are only new proofs of the central interest of the book. It is not only by its flashes of wit, by its bursts of eloquence, by the steady and relentless beat of its

satire, that it is redeemed: but still more by the marvellous strength and grasp with which the whole of human nature is seized, bound to the dissecting table, and made to yield, to his pitiless scalpel, the tale of its subterfuges, and pretences, and tricks. Other satires have their special application. Who is it that can limit the range of the satire in the *Tale of a Tub*?

A new epitome of the argument and purpose of the *Tale of a Tub*, forms no fitting part of a biography of Swift. It is scarcely for a biographer even to indulge in detailed criticism. But what, we may ask, was the aim towards which Swift was then minded that his genius should work? That genius, it must be remembered, was now at its period of greatest buoyancy and lavishness of resource; just as at a later time we find it growing in depth, in concentration, and in keenness of cynical contempt. In what direction then did this abounding overflow of resource expend itself?

There are few books in the language, so short and so current in the mouths of men, the full meaning of which it is harder to grasp. The common account of the book is that it describes, under the names of three brothers, who interpret variously the terms of their father's will, the three main divisions which have appeared in Christendom, and which separate the Lutheran from the Roman Catholic on the one side, and the Calvinist on the other. As a treatise on ecclesiastical divisions, it was read in Swift's own day: and as such a treatise it has in great measure been accepted since. If follies and absurdi-

ties are exposed, it is, according to this assumption, only in so far as such follies are exemplified in these ecclesiastical disputes.

One simple fact alone disposes of this view of the *Tale*. Of the whole book (reckoning Dedications, Preface, Introduction, and Digressions—and no one of these can be taken away without marring its completeness) only about one-third is even indirectly concerned with these ecclesiastical disputes. How these are treated, we may see presently: but first, what are the broad foundations upon which the superstructure is raised? It is in these that the abiding interest of the book is to be found.

Swift begins with a Dedication, nominally from the bookseller to Lord Somers. It is clearly written later, possibly five or six years later, than the rest of the work. Somers was the chief ornament of that party to which Swift still adhered: and it is with marvellous skill that a eulogy, sounding so oddly amidst the general sarcasm that pervades the whole, is pronounced without any lapse into flattery. The bookseller dedicates the book to Lord Somers, because it was to be given to the worthiest: and amongst all the learned whom he consulted there was not one who did not, while placing himself at the summit, assign the second place to Lord Somers.¹ The very

¹ It is perhaps worth comparing this with another dedication, nearer to our own day, which has something of the same sarcasm. The earliest edition of *Vivian Grey* bore the following dedication:—"To the Best and Greatest of Men, I dedicate these volumes. He for whom it is intended, will accept and appreciate the compliment. Those for whom it is not intended will—do the same." "*Detur dignissimo*" is the text of both.

folly of vanity is made to pay tribute to the worth of Somers: the vein of sarcasm is not once interrupted: and yet in these few words we have a picture of Somers's position amongst his countrymen more vivid than would be given by volumes of elaborate adulation.

But a mere satire on fulsome and mercenary dedications would not be sufficient outlet for Swift's genius. He rises to a new stage in the author's *Dedication to Prince Posterity*. For the first time, here, Swift shows, without any of the consuming passion that gives an angry weight of denunciation to all his later efforts, a power that is peculiarly his own. It is that of covering by dignified and even eloquent argument what we find the moment we get below the surface, to be nothing but arrant inconsistency and nonsense in a solemn dress. No method could work better in sarcasm. But when we ask what is the aim of the satire, it is easier to answer what is struck at than what is not. Is it the fictitious satisfaction which humanity looks for from posthumous fame: or is it the narrowness of eyesight which, content with the verdict of the moment, is blind to the view that posterity will take? Is it the writers of the day who are being laughed at, or is it human nature itself which must revolve in an endless circle, and can never hope to have a means of judging what is worth preserving and what is not? The description of the dire work by which Time so grievously wrongs his ward, Posterity, rises to eloquence in its veiled sarcasm:—

“His inveterate malice is such to the writings of our age, that of several thousands produced yearly from this renowned city, before the next Revolution of the Sun, there is not one to be heard of: Unhappy Infants, many of them barbarously destroyed, *before they have so much as learnt their mother-tongue to beg for Pity.* Some he stifles in their Cradles, others he frights into convulsions, whereof they suddenly die: some he flays alive, others he tears Limb from Limb. Great Numbers are offered to Moloch, and the rest tainted by his breath, die of a languishing Consumption.”

Not one word is wasted. The satire never hastens to disclose or pronounce itself: and yet, with marvellous skill, the reader is never allowed to lose that easy poise of attitude which helps him to feel as if he viewed from a sufficient height the sarcasm that underlies the solemn earnestness.

In the Dedication to Lord Somers, Swift ridicules the mercenary cringing of the day, and in the Dedication to Prince Posterity, its bleary-eyed narrowness of view. In the Author's Preface, which comes next, he takes another and a wider sweep. His book is to be a Tale of a Tub,¹ thrown to the wits to stay their on-coming rush upon the weak sides of Religion and Government, even as sailors throw the barrel to the whale to save the ship. Some day a greater work is to be attempted on a complete scale: and an Academy is to be founded in which room is to be made for all the certified wits, and where they are to indulge their

¹ Mr. Forster quotes the use of this phrase, by Sir Thomas More, and afterwards by Ben Jonson as the title of a comedy. It is noteworthy that Defoe, writing against the treatment of the Irish Dissenters in this very year, 1704, speaks of the Bill disabling them, as a “Tale of a Tub”—exactly the sense of the words in the title chosen by Swift.

vagaries at peace. Meantime Swift throws his contribution to stop their instant attacks. Here he flings down the glove to the Wits: and it is this challenge, and the merciless rout with which he follows it up, that form the central ideas of the book. He overwhelms with ridicule the Witwoulds and the Petulants of the day. He turns inside out their weak, hothouse, town-bred humour: and with all the pitiless force of his politest and gravest irony he pursues the miserable figment of rancorous satire that each drivelled out against his neighbours. Step by step the satire advances, helped out by occasional glimpses of the lurking smile: and, as he concludes, the assumption of reverence has so grown upon the author that he can only hope some day to produce his labour of years in a *Panegyric on the World*, and a *Modest Defence of the Rabble in All Ages*.

The Introduction is the coping stone to the four opening chapters. It brings into a focus the follies that he has so far satirized, and shows them, as they were actually fermenting in the would-be learned circles round him, in these years from 1697 to 1704. No weapon of sarcasm is neglected, and after the ground has been mapped out, and the general positions assigned, each new illustration, each subordinate metaphor, seems to give some new point to the ridicule.

Men can get over the heads of others only, he says, by three contrivances: the Pulpit, the Gallows-Ladder, and the Stage Itinerant. Those who use these instruments represent, amongst us, first, the Modern Saint,

who has all the worm-eaten rottenness, all the inflammable quality, of the wooden Pulpit from which he speaks: next, the lovers of faction and of poetry (strangely grouped together), ascending painfully the ladder of the gallows to descend betimes so fatally: and, lastly, the votaries of Grub Street, whose type is found in the mountebanks of the Stage Itinerant. We of Grub Street—for he reckons himself amongst the number—have not been appreciated by this superficial age. They do not understand our profundities: they do not know the intricacies which must be unravelled before they reach our meaning. We have lost our rightful allies: the scientific virtuosos of Gresham College, and the literary wits of Will's, have opposed us most cruelly with all the rancour that deserters ever show. There is nothing left for us but to catalogue the long list of our treatises: to publish forth the profundity of our learning: to preserve for posterity our just contempt for antiquity: and to add, possibly, another to our profound productions, as the author is about to do.

Satire such as this reaches far beyond the accidents of ecclesiastical controversies, beyond the realm even of literary cliques: it pursues human nature, and routs it out from all its subterfuges and disguises. "What is all this innate desire for notoriety worth?" is the question that it seems to ask. "What is the value of the verdict that assigns that notoriety? By what means is it gained?" "And yet, if we abandon the pursuit, is there anything better we can pursue instead?" There is no skimming over the surface to

catch a transient smile. On the contrary, each metaphor in the satire is followed up with the elaborate care which one of the Royal Society might have shown in explaining to his fellow-Greshamites the intricacies of a scientific process. There is nothing for us but the pulpit, the gallows, and the mountebank's stage. So long as we push and jostle one another in order to rise for a moment above the crowd, we must use one of these means. And, translated from metaphor, what are they? If we are not "Modern Saints" or fanatics, "refined from the dross and grossness of sense and human reason"; if we are not mad with party virulence or poetic frenzy, climbing only that we may dangle at a gibbet's end; then it is left us to be the mountebanks of the stage itinerant. There is no escape. Nature has made us all of the company of Grub Street, although the sect of Gresham please themselves with the "husks" of "virtuoso experiments," and the wits of Will's rejoice in the "husks and the harlots" of modern comedy.

So much for the basis on which the satire is built. When he has mapped this out, he breaks into the story: but it is of comparatively little importance, and he shows marvellously little adherence to the thread of such story as he has to tell. He soon digresses, and what follows is little more than an expansion of the theme which he has propounded in the introductory chapters. The ecclesiastical references are few: the main object of the satire is not this or that phase of religious opinion, but the inherent follies of the age: and even these follies themselves

are shown to be only variations upon the everlasting weaknesses inherent in human nature.

If there is any one to whose tone that of Swift bears a resemblance, it is the author of *Hudibras*.¹ The same, or nearly the same, follies, roused the ire of each. The same contempt for the assumptions of infant science appears in each. By each the same tone of irony is assumed. Fanaticism provokes the same ridicule in the one and in the other. Each travesties the sophistries of the saints, and finds the origin of zeal in the vapours. But here the parallel ends. The thin and monotonous stream of Butler's wit is scarcely heard beside the full flow of Swift's satire. The method of each is different. Butler keeps close to the satire with which he pursues the fanatical sects of his day, and only occasionally illustrates it by glancing at some more general truth of human nature. With Swift it is exactly the reverse. From the larger glance with which he surveys human nature, he brings himself gradually down to analyse this or that phase of its follies. Butler works from his own surroundings outwards: Swift, from a wider view of human nature, works downwards and inwards. By turns he strikes at the Greshamites, with their fantastic and ill-balanced schemes of physical philosophy: at the wits of Will's, with their efforts after eccentricity that assumes the name of wit: at the fanatics, with their spleen and hatred, for which "they make a shift to find the plausible name of

¹ Mrs. Pilkington tells us how, long after, she found that Swift could repeat the whole of *Hudibras* by heart.—*Memoirs*, i. p. 136.

Zeal": at the universal treatises which were to make this age the wonder of the world, and to supersede such effete productions as those of Homer with his "gross ignorance of the Laws of this Realm": at those proud possessors of mother wit,¹ whose imagination is much too lofty to submit to Reason: who made "Invention the master, and gave to Method and Reason only the office of its Lacqueys." These are the aims of his sarcasm, and to attain these aims he spends three-fourths of the book on those digressions, which give to his genius room for its lavishness of wit. Even when, from follies that are as old and as wide-reaching as human nature itself, and from the lower range of eccentric oddities that were specially characteristic of his own age, he comes down to his parable on ecclesiastical disputes, he approaches these by a method all his own. The philosophy of clothes, as he explains, is seen in operation over all nature, mental and physical. On this profound philosophy rest all our arbitrary distinctions and all our current reverence for rank: and of this philosophy one phase is the religious adornment which divides us into sects. The fanaticism of our day, which accidental coincidences of vapours in the brain produce,² is as old as the Sect of the Æolists with their wind-bags, and as the frenzy of the priestess of the Delphic oracle.

¹ "Whose imaginations are hard-mouthed, and exceedingly disposed to run away with their Reason, which I have observed from long experience, to be a very light rider, and easily shook off."

² Compare *Hudibras*, Part II. Canto iii. v. 773, with the ninth section of the *Tale*.

His contact with the religious sects that he found around him, is thus suggested by a broad and general theme of satire. But when he is once brought down to deal with these sects, he leaves us no reason for regretting that the portion of the book which contains the nominal story is so small. The account of Martin, Jack and Peter, the names under which the Church of England, the Dissenters, and the Romish Church are typified, is the poorest piece in the whole. The metaphors are often strained: their proportion is irregular: the satire has lost its wide human interest and has dwindled into detail. We are glad to get rid of Jack's aversion to bagpipes, of his indignation at sign-posts, of his prejudice against grace before meat. We are wearied with Peter's Roaring Bull, his pardons sold to Rogues, his Raree shows, and his all-comprehending bread. The grasp of Swift's satire throughout the greater part of the book shows us, by its own contrast, how comparatively narrow was this.

This part of the *Tale* is not only the weakest: it is also the most offensive. But it was this which struck the minds of contemporaries most quickly. It was here that the force of the parallels was most plainly perceived: and once perceived, we can scarcely wonder that they caused offence. The most sacred mysteries of Christianity are treated with a callous indifference, of whose effect Swift was probably utterly unconscious. In writing the *Tale of a Tub*, Swift clearly gave himself a freedom in regard to religious matters which he never afterwards assumed. He never of set purpose adopted the tone of the sceptic,

and such natural scepticism as was inherent in him, he afterwards tamed into silence. But in the *Tale of a Tub*, he treated religious matters not freely only, but with what to ordinary minds appears irreverence. This absolute unconsciousness of the effect of his own words, this impervious insensibility in uttering things from which most men would recoil, is seen still more notably at a later period of Swift's life, in that coarseness at once so noisome and so apathetic, which has left on his later pages a stain of another kind. The same characteristic, which it is difficult to disconnect from the forebodings of mental disease that cast a shadow on his life, now led him to stir to exasperation, and yet all unconsciously, the religious sentiments of those whose Church he desired to defend. But he neither weighed the consequences, nor could he afterwards understand the sensation that he caused. For us, however, it need cause no surprise. Swift had proclaimed war against the Wits and the Fanatics. Between him and them there never could be peace. And in the unrestrained flow of his satire there was plenty of material that helped the Wits and the Fanatics to rouse the susceptibilities of the Orthodox, and to represent Swift as a dangerous and irreligious buffoon. In the lavish metaphor, in the ever-varying style, in the light cynicism of the *Tale*, there is none of the *sæva indignatio* that impelled Swift's later pen. But the foundation of much of his later trouble was laid in the struggle that was now begun. The wits and the pedants covered their shame under this one-sided aspect which they contrived to give to the

book : the wide sweep of Swift's general sarcasm was overlooked, and undue weight was given to the scattered pages that seemed to treat too lightly of religious symbols.¹

Before we condemn unreservedly Swift's attitude towards these religious symbols, we must mark the impression made on him by the time at which he lived. It is only by a strong effort of imagination that we can bring ourselves to understand how deep and penetrating was the hatred of cant, stamped on almost all the leading intellects of the time by the recollection of what had gone before. The sufferings of his grandfather, for whom he bore so much reverence, the changed lot of his own family, his own associations with Presbyterian intolerance, intensified Swift's repugnance to the days of Puritan supremacy, and his contempt for the unctuous professions of religion which had been made the cloak for selfish political designs. It was the hatred of this cant that impelled Butler to write as he did in *Hudibras*. But in Swift there was something more. Puritanical cant led to a reaction which showed itself in a modish scepticism and a heartless debauchery. Between the two, men might well despair. It was the hatred at once of the canting hypocrite and of the free-thinker that made the motive of Swift's satire in the *Tale of a Tub*. Others might forget their repugnance, and might

¹ Swift's ridicule of the nasal snuffle of the fanatic, of his heavenward aspirations and his exceedingly earthly propensities, is most marked in the discourse at the close of the volume, *On the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*. This is also noticeable as the coarsest of his early works.

content themselves with moderation. Swift refused to forget, and to him moderation was impossible. He detested the hypocrisies of religion, he distrusted the solemn conventionalities which cloaked its treatment: and none of the fastidious reverence that might have held back other men from unrestrained ridicule operated for him.

From Butler, as we have seen, Swift adopted something of the tone that runs through the book: but a casual coincidence of tone and opinion is almost all that Swift borrowed from the author of *Hudibras*. The mixed reading of these later years at Sir William Temple's house, is laid considerably under contribution for illustrations and quotations. Homer and Herodotus are cited: Irenæus is made to yield, as a motto for the book, the cabalistic sign which he describes as used by certain heretical sects in celebrating the rite of baptism: and here and there we find symptoms of Swift's study of French literature, in the use of words taken directly from the French. But of all authors the one quoted most often, and something in the spirit of whose genius seems most in sympathy with that of Swift, is Lucretius. Swift had, indeed, little enough in common with the philosophy of Lucretius. But in both we have the same gloom of cynicism. In both there is the same profound scorn of superstition, and yet the same belief that in superstition we must find the main source of most human action. In Swift as in Lucretius, the literary instinct has made the general and wide-reaching satire far more strong in its im-

pression than the ostensible object of the book. If we read the *Tale of a Tub* with understanding of its real meaning, we have as little impression, at the end, of the quarrels of Peter and Martin and Jack, as we have, after reading the poem of Lucretius, of the niceties of the Epicurean system. Divided by eighteen centuries, there is yet much in the mental attitude of the two men that brings them close together. Swift's supposed debt to Rabelais is almost proverbial. But, after all, it is more in the following of a recognized vehicle of satire, than in anything else. Swift read Rabelais, as the acknowledged master of a peculiar style of sarcasm. The style has already become antiquated: and yet his adoption of it leaves the essential qualities of the *Tale of a Tub* absolutely unimpaired.

The book appeared in April or May, 1704, and just after its appearance, Swift set out for Ireland. It took no long time to make the world feel that a new power had appeared in literature. So early as June, 1704, when the book was only a few weeks old, we find the subject of its authorship canvassed. Oxford, so we are told in a letter written by Atterbury of that date,¹ found the probable authors within her own circle. There were then at Oxford two young students, the one named Edmund Smith, whose tattered gown and still more tattered reputation got him the nickname of Captain Rag, the other John Philips, his deniure, but likeable companion, much addicted to his bottle and his pipe.² To these

¹ *Atterbury to Trelawney*, June, 1704.

² The two were inseparable, and they formed a strange enough pair. Smith was as yet known beyond his friends only as the

two, the authorship of the *Tale of a Tub* was attributed: and their much-belauded, but unproductive wits may not have combated the rumour too eagerly. The belief that the author was to be found amongst this set was shown also in the well-meant ascription of the book to Smalridge, by Sacheverell.¹ But Smalridge's ecclesiastical reputation was of too much value to him to let him rest under the impeachment. Other rumours as to its authorship were invented by the curiosity of men. Swift's cousin Thomas, who had been chaplain in Sir William Temple's house, not only was credited with, but accepted, the honour, which a guess, more near the truth than the others, brought to him. Dr. Davenant, writing to Marlborough's secretary to ask a chaplaincy for this Thomas Swift, seeks to recommend him by crediting

author of a Latin ode on Dr. Pocock: to the University he was known as one of the most outrageously profligate of her sons, whose scandals had been endured only on account of the reputation he enjoyed in a society where a little Greek went a long way, as the most complete and perfect Greek and Latin scholar the nation had produced. His own follies, and the conceit engendered by praises so ludicrous, destroyed what in spite of the nonsense written of him by his contemporaries may have been a genius of some promise. Patronized by Addison and Halifax, befriended by Prior, he came before the world a year later than this with a tragedy, called *Phædra and Hippolitus*, destined, as his friends believed, to destroy the debased taste for the Italian Opera, and outstripping, on their own ground, as these friends asserted, not Racine only, but Enripides. The tragedy was damned: and the author soon forgotten. Smith's companion, Philips, had already written a parody of Milton, called *The Splendid Shilling*, and with less of brilliancy, yet enjoyed something of a sounder reputation than his friend.

¹ "Not all that you and I have in the world," said Smalridge, with unwitting truth, "nor all that ever we shall have, should hire me to write the *Tale of a Tub*."—Johnson's *Lives* (Ed. Cunningham), vol. iii. p. 165.

him with the authorship of the book whose effect has been so enormous.¹ By a still more extravagant absurdity a rumour was propagated in later years that Lord Somers was himself the author: that he and Lord Shrewsbury had exeogitated the satire in their youthful leisure at Whiteladies in Worcestershire: and that they had found the prototypes for Martin, Jack and Peter in some respectable inmates of that house.²

How soon the impression of the real authorship became general, it is scarcely possible to say. Before Swift's breach with the Whigs was complete that impression had spread: but it was surrounded by doubt, which only slowly passed away. Dr. Johnson maintained that doubt³ more than once in conversation, and repeats it, although with little tone of conviction, in his *Life of Swift*. Rightly finding in the *Tale* the most free and impetuous burst of Swift's genius, he let his personal repugnance to Swift lead him into the mistake of denying Swift's power to have been sufficient for its production. But in Johnson's day the disbelief was little more than a lingering paradox. It seems clear that Swift's authorship was believed very soon after the book was written, that in spite of Bolingbroke's denial of the fact to Dr. King,⁴ it was impressed upon Queen

¹ The Letter is printed in a note to Nichol's *Collection of Poems*, vol. iv.

² See Cooksey's *Life of Lord Somers*.

³ Johnson, however, really produces the best argument against his own doubts when he says, "No other claimant can be produced."

⁴ King mentions the denial in his *Anecdotes* (p. 60), but without giving it much credit.

Anne to Swift's disadvantage by the Duchess of Somerset and Archbishop Sharp, and that it hindered his promotion in the Church. But while this is almost certain, it is extremely doubtful whether those who sought to produce that effect on the Queen's mind were offended so much by Swift's references to the Church, as by the bearing of his satire in other directions. Swift intended no disloyalty to his party. In one passage where he names some prominent politicians with a touch of ridicule, they are Tories and not Whigs whom he chooses for the laugh.¹ Dedicated to Lord Somers, the Whig of Whigs, he could hardly have meant to offend that party. But attacks on fanaticism were inconvenient when the Whigs were seeking to join hands with the Dissenters. The Whigs, too, were strong in Will's and Gresham College, even if they did not find their own withers wrung in the attacks on Grub Street.²

From the general admiration which the genius of the book extorted even from angry readers, Congreve almost alone, perhaps with some memory of the sarcastic references to modern comedy in the *Tale*, felt himself bound to differ, although he allows that in doing so, he dissents from the "opinion of the multitude."³ Blackmore, in spite of the lenient treatment

¹ He suggests to Seymour, Howe, and some others, a useful Bill for turning Bedlam to account. Section IX.

² See Appendix II., on the Editions of *Tale of a Tub*.

³ "I am of your opinion as to the *Tale of a Tub*. I am not alone in the opinion, as you are there: but I am pretty near it, having but very few on my side: but those few are worth a

he received in the *Battle of the Books*, now appended to the *Tale*, attacked the writer furiously. Wotton¹ tried to avenge the sarcasms on himself and his ponderous ally Bentley, by commenting on the book : and Curll produced a so-called Key.²

Before we leave this year we must turn to another of its experiences for Swift, in a matter which lay still closer to his heart, and which was to determine more decidedly than anything which had gone before, the bearings of his inner life.

Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, her companion, had now been for some years resident in Ireland. Stella had shared Swift's household cares, had been near him both at Trim and in Dublin, and had rested upon his advice in the conduct of her life and

million. However, I have never spoke my sentiments, not caring to contradict a multitude."—*Congreve to Keally*, Oct. 28, 1704. Berkeley's *Literary Relics*, p. 340.

¹ Wotton attempted to bring the charge of plagiarism against the *Tale of a Tub*, as he did against the *Battle of the Books*. "The banter of transubstantiation is taken from the Duke of Buckingham's conference with an Irish priest. The Duke bantering the doctrine by changing a cock into a horse," etc.

² It was in this, that Curll represented Thomas Swift as the chief author. Thomas Swift, it is said, began a defence of Sir William Temple under the title of *Tale of a Tub*. His companion, Jonathan Swift, borrowed it, took it to Ireland, kept it for seven years, and published it imperfect, "for indeed he was unable to finish it after the intended method"—although he added the dedication and digressions (which, as Curll did not see, are the best parts of the book). Wotton's *Defence of his Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning*, appended to the 3rd edition in 1705, contains his comments. He attacked Swift as the editor of Temple's *Miscellanies*; and speaks of "his brother" as the reputed "editor" of the *Tale of a Tub*. Brother is, of course, a mistake for cousin: and Wotton asserts that this "brother" obtained a living from Lord Somers at Temple's intercession, in spite of which "he played upon" Lord Somers in the Dedication. Wotton's scent for sarcasm is keen!

the management of her little fortune. When absent from Ireland, he, even so early as this, corresponded with her constantly. But in their friendship so far, only the old ties of Moor Park were renewed and perhaps drawn a little closer: and to Swift at least no thought had been suggested of a still more intimate bond. The fear of compromising his independence, his morbid looking forward to a goal always in the distance, may help, but only help, to explain a decision so mysterious. But it now appeared that the relation which had been so pleasant to Swift was not to proceed without being forced to define itself more clearly. He was awakened from the dream which he indulged of carrying on through life the uneventful companionship of tutor and pupil: and for the first time, perhaps, he found he had to deal with a woman's heart.

While he was last in Dublin, he had renewed an old acquaintanceship with Dr. William Tisdall, whom he had known in the days of his residence at Kilroot. Tisdall had come to Dublin from Belfast, and had brought thence, like Swift, a strong jealousy of the Presbyterians, a readiness to combat them in literary controversy,¹ and a High Churchmanship that had made him more of a Tory than Swift was as yet prepared to proclaim himself, but not more than secured for him a good deal of Swift's sympathy. While Swift was absent from Dublin during this winter, Tisdall saw much of Stella and of Mistress Dingley, and was apparently entrusted by Swift with

¹ See *Swift to Tisdall*, Feb. 3, 1703.

some of their business affairs. Swift carried on with him a correspondence on the political affairs of the day, and especially on that topic that, more than any other, was making ecclesiastical bias the criterion of party, the Bill against Occasional Conformity. As the letters proceed, the political references become more impatient and more transient, and the tone of irony on Tisdall's pretensions to Stella's favour, more distinct. But Swift's banter seemed to Tisdall only a wilful ignoring of his claims. He had proposed in proper form, for Stella's hand, and he seems to have resented not so much Swift's claim to decide the question, as Swift's interference with the suit from personal motives. He wrote in anger, and Swift replied with the perfect temper that now and then he could assume in spite of bitter feelings. The incident does not seem to be a very extraordinary or inexplicable one. Swift found himself suddenly confronted with the necessity of choosing to make Stella indisputably his own, or of parting with her love to another. He was anxious to avoid either alternative, and he acted as this anxiety prompted. The over-minuteness of biographical criticism has concocted further evidence about the incident, favourable to Swift or the reverse. On the one hand Deane Swift, whose eccentric judgments scarcely merit much attention, thinks it well to make a show of impartiality in blaming his kinsman for preventing a promising alliance by insisting upon terms to which Tisdall could not yield. Sheridan, who is almost as little to be trusted as Deane Swift in details like this, ascribes

the rejection to Stella and to Stella only. Looking to Swift's own letters we have an explanation, as simple as it well could be, of an incident, unpleasant indeed for Swift, entangled by the strange conditions that he had imposed on himself and Stella, but reflecting no stain of selfishness or cruelty upon him. He admits most cordially to Tisdall his preference for Stella above all other women.¹ He avows to him his wish that the suit should be carried on in the form most just and most respectful to Stella and to Stella's mother. But in avowing to Tisdall that marriage was a thing that neither his own fortune nor his humour ever allowed to cross his mind, Swift gave intimation quite as plain that this and this only kept him back from claiming the love of Stella. Tisdall's love of domestic peace and happiness he warmly congratulates: and with something of sadness, he contrasts the unfruitful ambition that was eating up his own years.²

Most men would have understood this hint. It was perfectly clear that Swift had chosen Stella's as the love he was to cherish through life. Quite as clear is it that he knew Stella had chosen his. He had formed ambitions for himself and her, which might be ended for ever by the blundering of one

¹ "If my fortunes and humour served me to think of that state, I should certainly, amongst all persons on earth, make your choice: because I never saw that person whose conversation I entirely valued, but hers."

² "I give you joy of your good fortunes, and envy very much your prudence and temper, and love of peace and settlement: the reverse of which has been the great uneasiness of my life, and is likely to continue so."

who had intervened in a friendship that was tolerably well known to the world, and who had done so with less, and not more, to offer her, in the way of worldly goods, than Swift himself possessed. Swift could not, nay more, he would not, clinch the friendship by marriage, merely in order to have an answer for Tisdall. He told him, however, almost as plainly as words could, what his own views were, and what it was that as yet kept Stella and himself apart. The letter was written just before he left London, and it had the desired effect of closing the episode. Swift never forgot the grudge against Tisdall, and is never doubtful about getting a response to his own ill-feeling against him, from Stella.¹ But when he came back to Dublin he must have found clear proof that the ascendancy which he had gained over her heart in the old days at Moor Park was stronger than he had dreamed. The open avowal of his preference for her above all women, must have forced on him a much more definite recognition of his relations for the future, to her whose conversation alone "he entirely valued, and who, of all persons in the world, would be his choice." Alas, for his own life's peace, these plans still looked forward to something to come, instead of grasping the present. Ambition had first to be satisfied. Then, and not till then, might there be room and time for love.

¹ The *Journal* has many references to infirmities of Tisdall, which only Swift's morbid insensibility to what was coarse could make him recall.

CHAPTER V

YEARS OF WAITING AND SUSPENSE

1704-1708

ÆTAT. 37-41

Swift's position in literature and politics—The decadence of the Tories—Successes of the Whigs—Blenheim—Tory factiousness—Dissolution of 1705—The Irish Parliament—Swift's early efforts for his Church—Correspondence with Archbishop King—Contrasts between the characters of Swift and King—The Tories and the Church—*The Memorial of the Church of England*—Convocation—Hopelessness of the Tory cause—Swift's personal life—His associates in London—His place amongst them—His literary work during these years—*Meditation on a Broom-Stick*—*Vanbrugh's House*—*Baucis and Philemon*—Long stay in Ireland—Invitation to Moor Park—Continued suspense—Ministers leaning to the Whigs—Pembroke, Lord-Lieutenant—Society at the Castle—The "Castilian" Language—Swift in London again—Hopes and disappointment—Harley's scheme—Its failure—Dismissal of the Tory remnant—Swift's labour to secure the First-Fruits for his Church—His meeting with Godolphin—Wavering allegiance to his party—The death of Prince George—A new period opening for Swift.

IN the last chapter we saw how Swift had gone back to Ireland just before midsummer, 1704, already with some feelings of dissatisfaction with the Whigs, although little inclined to break with those associations that had hitherto bound him to their party.

In this chapter there is but little to tell of the personal details of Swift's life, for the four years that follow. But we may trace with some certainty the effect which the shifting phases of the party struggle had on his future during these years. We may get one step forward in the discovery of what caused that change in his party allegiance which has been so often ascribed to dishonest motives. We may see him gradually assuming a larger place in the brilliant literary circles of the day : and acquiring, year by year, greater stubbornness of purpose, greater independence in his choice of action, and greater keenness of cynical contempt.

When Swift left London he had already the reputation of a keen and effective controversialist, and of a master in a characteristic vein of humour. By his intimates, his genius was rated higher : but it must not be forgotten that not one of those works on which his later fame rests, was yet published ; and that he forbore to grasp the wider fame which the *Tale of a Tub*, when it appeared soon after, might have brought to him. During the three or four years that followed, we may observe no infrequent signs of the impression that his genius had produced. We see the beginnings of those friendships which helped to define his literary position, and we find him associating with the great on terms that prove how his power had already made itself felt. But such glimpses are now merely fragmentary. For the most part, during these years, he seems to stay his hand, amid the uncertainty of the political struggle,

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and the doubt he felt as to his own position therein. It is only when that position is gaining new definiteness, and his aims are becoming more clear, that he again tries his pen on any important efforts.

The change in the fortunes of political parties during these years was indeed rapid. At the beginning of 1704, the Tory party seemed not only to be in possession of power, but to be in a fair way of maintaining, if not of advancing, its influence. The Dissenters were unpopular: and from that unpopularity, the Tories were most likely to benefit. They could further count upon the inclination of the Queen in their favour. The Whig junta, whatever sympathy it might have from some of the Ministers, seemed then far enough from realizing its hopes.

But when little more than a year had passed, Toryism had become completely demoralized; and the process is interesting in Swift's life, as it shows us why Swift still refused to be a Tory, in the sense in which Toryism was understood in 1704 and 1705. The stars in their courses, indeed, fought against Toryism. If a Tory admiral gained successes, they stopped short, as it were in very spite, of the point which could make them great national triumphs. There were discontented Whigs who murmured against the Government: but the only effect of their murmurs was to strengthen the Ministers, and make them more free to show their independence of extreme party views. In the spring of 1704, the Government had been ostensibly Tory: before the close of the year, not only were many of its members

changed, but those who remained were more inclined to show their independence of Tory dictation.

First came the victory of Blenheim. With a hazardous recklessness of enterprise which success, and success alone, could justify, Marlborough had disregarded the nervous timidity and the pedantic expostulations of the citizen strategists of the Dutch States, had left the neighbourhood of the Low Countries, had effected a junction with Prince Eugene, and with him had advanced to meet Tallard and the Elector of Bavaria in the heart of Europe. The allies had met a force of sixty thousand men, the pick of the French army, with a deficiency of eight thousand in point of numbers, and with the additional disadvantage of having to cross an almost impassable morass in the face of a scathing fire. Never was success more brilliant. With a total loss in killed and wounded of about thirteen thousand, the allies cut to pieces the army of the Grand Monarch. Of the sixty thousand soldiers that had met them only twenty thousand, at most, ever fought again beneath the standard of Louis.

The victory was won on the 13th of August, 1704. News like this had never reached England within the memory of man. The nation fairly lost its head in the rejoicings. Fickle as she afterwards proved, England was now ready to rush into exaggeration in the pride she felt in Marlborough's feat.

Time only was necessary to wear out the triumph. The war would certainly become irksome: the weight of the taxes would be felt: the successes would

grow paler : the objects of the war less clear. Heedless of this, the Tories began the attack as soon as Parliament met, on the 29th of October. The Bill against Occasional Conformity was once more pressed, but without the aid of St. John, and against the now avowed opposition of the Ministers. It passed the Commons : and in order to press it through the Lords, an expedient was found, drawn from the worst period of Charles the Second's reign. A plan was formed of tacking the Bill to a Money Bill, and so throwing upon the Lords the responsibility of rejecting it, and of stopping supplies at a moment of all others most critical. The plan was fortunately defeated. The more moderate Tories stood aloof : and the rabid of their party showed only 134 votes against 251. Their headlong rashness had failed to ruin the constitution, but had to all appearance shattered their own party. Demoralization never proceeded more rapidly, and never seemed to be more complete. The Ministers were free to disembarass themselves of such Tories as remained in their ranks ; and on the 5th of April, 1705, Parliament was dissolved.

In Ireland, matters seemed to go as well for the Government, with its newly-developed Whiggism. Parliament there met on the 10th of Feb., 170 $\frac{5}{4}$. The Commons expressed their devoted loyalty to England : their zeal for the Church was avowed in language studiously moderate, and had acquired none of that aggressive vehemence which soon after became a sign of party feeling. They voted the required supplies :

and then turned to schemes for the improvement of trade. Under each of these questions there smouldered some fire that was to burst out later in Swift's life: but as yet the danger was not visible. It was only when a proposal for the improvement of the Hemp and Flax manufacture (one of the few industries that the economic selfishness and blindness of England had left to Ireland) came under consideration, that dangerous ground was reached. In the course of this a question as to the commutation of the tithe payable to the clergy upon these manufactures, was mooted: the indignation of the Irish House of Convocation was roused: the clergy and the Commons bandied words with one another; but when the struggle threatened to rise high, it was stayed by a summary prorogation. It is curious that no biographer of Swift has taken notice of this quarrel, anticipating a struggle in which thirty years later he took so active a part. These thirty years, indeed, made his voice more authoritative, and defined his attitude: but the indication of a desire to curb the rights of his order doubtless excited in the mind of Swift much the same feelings in 1705 as in 1733.

Already Swift had begun to exert himself for privileges of the kind which appeared to be here attacked, and had begun an effort which was ultimately to complete his separation from the Whigs. He had already entered on that long correspondence with Archbishop King¹ of Dublin, which endured, in

¹ William King had been a prominent adherent of the Revolution, and had proved the sincerity of his convictions by undergoing

spite of many strains and much irritation on both sides, till death ended it in 1729. These strains and that irritation were due to an essential difference of temperament between the two men. Swift was keen in his likes and dislikes, vehement in his partisanship, impatient of patronage and advice, and indisposed to tolerate mediocre ability in any assumption based on official rank. King was prosaic, moderate in character, domineering in his diocese, inclined to be pompous in his relations with those of inferior rank,

imprisonment at the hands of James II. As a first reward he received the Bishopric of Derry, and in 1703 was translated to Dublin, where he continued to be a commanding figure in Dublin society and in Irish politics for a quarter of a century. "I have great reason to be vain," writes Lady Carteret to Lady Sundon in 1724, "of having the Archbishop of Dublin for my lover. Few people have his wit and spirit. He is a prodigy at fourscore."—(*Sundon MS. Brit. Mus.*) His Palace of St. Pulcher's, or St. Sepulchre's, now transformed into a barracks, stood close to the Deanery in which Swift passed the last thirty years of his life. In principles a staunch Whig, he fell into disfavour when Toryism came for a few years to the front, and recovered his influence when the Hanoverian succession had actually taken place. But in his later years he found himself set aside as interfering with Walpole's scheme of governing Ireland from England only: and offended personal feeling threw him into the arms of the Irish Patriots. Never stooping to dishonesty, he yet never professed to set aside views of worldly ambition, and remained to the end a shrewd and clear-eyed man of business, graceful in manners and yet with a certain assumption of commonplace moralizing. It was this last that grated on Swift. Lord Orrery tells a story of King having been instrumental in preventing Swift's appointment as Dean of Derry, on account partly of his youth, partly, as was alleged, of his constant visits to London. The story is without other authority. Thus much, at least, may be said: Swift never gives a hint of this ground of complaint in any letter to King, where angry encounters are constantly repeated: he never refers to it to any other correspondent: and throughout their long acquaintance he is frequently on terms of cordial friendship which would be unlikely, had he known that King was the cause of his first disappointment in the struggle of life.

and suspicious of those around him. We shall have to view some curious passages of arms: and Swift's feeling, at its worst, is summed up in his own words, that the Archbishop was "a wit and a scholar, but I hate him as I hate garlick."¹

Before the close of 1704, Swift had written from Trim to the Archbishop, then in London, urging on his attention the necessity of striving for a remission of the First-Fruits and Twentieths to the Church in Ireland. A concession of the same sort had been granted in England on the occasion of the last Royal birthday (6th Feb., 170 $\frac{4}{5}$), and Swift sought to gain for his own Church the same favour. The matter involved scarcely any pecuniary benefit to Swift himself. His influence with the Archbishop might well, under the prompting of self-interest, have been husbanded for personal objects: and to become known as importuning for such a claim was not a good way to gain the patronage of the Ministry. But the zeal that he here shows did not slack till he had won his point, and this was not till after he had fairly broken with Godolphin's Ministry.

The election in England was now proceeding. The Tories were hard pressed. One question and one question only seemed likely to serve as a rallying cry: The Church in danger. Some day they might trust to the national instinct being thereby excited and kindled into fervour; but now they found that it did not admit of very clear and definite statement. Their defence of the Church was at once timorous and

¹ Quoted by Lord Orrery in some MS. notes in an edition of his Remarks, in the possession of Lord Cork.

bigoted: their political principles both factious and chaotic.

Confused as were their aims, the Tories were compelled to resort to several incompatible election cries. The Whigs, with a clear issue before them, and resting on the successes gained in a war, as to which the nation had as yet no misgiving, naturally carried the day at the elections. While the Tories were still only planning a method of attack, the Whigs succeeded in sending a majority to the new Parliament of 1705.

The summer months brought new successes abroad, celebrated in London with all the usual pomp of a religious ceremonial likely to impress a London crowd. Within a week of that thanksgiving service, however, on the 31st of August, the Grand Jury had to consider a so-called seditious libel. The Church party had begun their attack: and a pamphlet which was now prosecuted called the "Memorial of the Church of England,"¹ may well be considered the war-note of the High Churchmen against a Ministry which they now entirely distrusted. The Church, so it was affirmed, might seem outwardly to be flourishing: but within "there is a hectic fever, lurking in the very bowels of it." The deeds of the Dissenters, when they had the Church in their power, are recapitulated: the hopes that they had been encouraged to form under William III.: the despair that had overtaken them on

¹ "*The Memorial of the Church of England, humbly offered to the consideration of all true Lovers of our Church and Constitution.*" It was written by Dr. Drake, with the help of others.

his death: their continued rancour: the bitterness with which all the enemies of Presbytery were proscribed in Scotland: and finally the renewed hopes which they cherished from the timidity and prevarication of the Ministers in connexion with the Bill against Occasional Conformity.

On the 25th of October, the new English Parliament met in circumstances most favourable to the Whigs. That party was growing stronger day by day, and was closing in upon the Court itself. In the last days of October, it is true, the staunch and humorous Tory, Arbuthnot, Swift's friend of after years, found favour sufficient to obtain the post of Physician to the Queen; but he must have found his post an irksome one in its surroundings for some years to come. The relative strength of parties may be taken as represented in the voting on the Speaker's election, when the Whig candidate obtained 248 votes against 205 for his opponent.

The cry of "The Church in Danger," hereafter to be an overwhelmingly strong one, was as yet little more than the feeble grumbling of a discontented faction. The murmur was at length brought to the issue of debate. Rochester, Nottingham, Haversham, and some of the Bishops urged the reality of the danger: Halifax, Somers and Wharton ridiculed it as a delusion invented by an ill-affected faction. The impression left by such fragments of the debate as are preserved, is that of a wrangle where neither side fully stated their views. The Tories could, indeed, assert that Occasional Conformity was permitted:

that sectaries were numerous : that Ministers were wavering friends of the Church. But they could not say, although they felt, that the hopes of the Dissenters had been encouraged by the late King : that these hopes, after a brief eclipse, were again in the ascendant in view of the Hanoverian succession. They could not complain of the hopes of the Dissenters during the past century without reviving the lingering suspicions that the Church had suffered because she had been inclined towards Popery and absolute power. They could not point to their fears for the future without implicating themselves in a charge of Jacobitism. On the other hand the Whigs were compelled on their side to show the same insincerity. They could not boldly say "We have allowed Occasional Conformity, because it strengthens the Dissenters on whose support we have to rely." They could scarcely profess, "You Churchmen have a monopoly which it may be needful to curtail, and your creed contains dogmas which may run counter to a break in the Succession. You helped on the Revolution, no doubt, but you were forced into an inconsistency in so doing. *We* have shaken ourselves free from these hamperings, and we are resolved to proceed, if need be, further in the same course." All this the Whigs might have said, but could not : still less could the Ministers, who were as yet hardly the proclaimed allies of the Whigs.

The Church was declared not to be in danger : and in adopting this speculative opinion the Lords were imitated by the House of Commons. It served as a

new stage in the definition of parties : the Church was driven one step farther from the Whigs, and the Ministers were driven one step closer to them. The full meaning of this afterwards became apparent.

The extreme Churchmen were, for the time, worsted in Parliament : and they fared no better in their proper domain. Convocation, too, saw this year a struggle between the High and the Low Church party. The Bishops in the Upper House agreed upon an address that repudiated all idea of danger to the Church. To this the more fiery High Churchmen of the Lower House refused to agree. They drew up an address of their own, which adroitly evaded the point in question, and showed their conviction that, if the Church were not in danger, its safety was due only to the benign influence of the Queen, and not to the care of her Ministers. Atterbury, again, stood in the forefront of the struggle. The contest raged fiercely, and the constitution of the Church seemed scarcely equal to the strain. At length prorogation was fixed on by the Ministers : and the Prolocutor was summoned to hear the Queen's mandate read in the Upper House. He came surrounded by a group of his supporters, amongst whom was Atterbury. The Queen's letter was read : but scarcely had the Bishop of Norwich, who was acting for the Archbishop, begun to read, when its purport, of proroguing Convocation, was perceived. Atterbury's heat almost broke into open violence. Plucking the Prolocutor's sleeve, he cried, " Begone : we have no business here." But on the other side there was one, scarcely less bold

or less prone to excitement. Gilbert Burnet of Sarum, while his brethren sat in amazement, stepped from his seat to the bar, rated the group for their insolence, and bade the Prolocutor quit the House at his peril. The threat was enough: the prorogation was pronounced, and for the time the crisis was past.

In March, 170^g₅, these winter sessions came to a close. They left the Tories still a scattered party. They had not learned their watchwords well. They had reached, as yet, no principle which could command the ardent support of any but the partizan. They had as yet attained to no popular cry which might gain them the ear of the country. In politics they were no more than a faction: in the Church they were nervous bigots. Their opponents had a safe majority in Parliament, and two more sessions of that favourable Parliament to run; and might well afford to overlook the attacks of a disorderly and heterogeneous opposition.

Swift had crossed to Ireland in May, 1704, and remained there till April, 1705. During the summer and autumn that followed, while the Whigs were to all appearance rapidly growing in power and importance, he was in London, and in constant intercourse with all the leading members of the party, both political and literary. As yet that intercourse was unalloyed by any bitterness of political alienation. Swift was still a Whig: the hopes of his party were still rising. Those with whom he associated were no longer men whose civility was of the proverbial type that belongs to cast courtiers. If he had misgivings

as to party allegiance, if his invincible independence suggested to him lines of divergence from his party, this would only tend to make him appear less of a rival to those of his associates who were thorough Whigs, less of a partizan to those others who leaned to the Tories. No period of Swift's life, perhaps, contains more of happiness than this; if he was unsettled, he was also to a great extent free from the disagreeable trammels of party ties. He was now in the prime of manhood, with experience widened, but energies not slacked. He had found congenial work, even though compelled to let the laurels lie ungathered. The illness that was to torture him through life had not yet suggested to him its full strength and pertinacity. The position he had attained in the Church did not indeed answer to his expectations, and still left him a poor man: but he was already independent, and his hopes were high. The bitter humour, the self-torture, the cynicism from whose ravages he was himself the chief sufferer, had not as yet been stirred to their depths. At Laracor he had quiet occupations as a relief from the doubts and anxieties of politics. When he broke from that scene, it was to pass weeks at Leicester with his mother, in his affection for whom Swift had well-nigh the only deep-lying emotion that was to him even as it is to other and more ordinary men. From Leicester he could come to London to find honoured welcome by his brother wits, held free of the company by all, recognized as its leader already by a few. If he touches for pastime on politics, it is within a range where he carries the sympathy of his

associates. If he had begun a struggle for his Church, it had not yet reached that pitch of intensity that made failure appear a personal insult and injury, prompting him to abjure the bond of political allegiance. And pervading all his life, already leavening all his friendships, there was the one enduring tenderness of his life—the companionship of her he valued most on earth.

It was now that Swift first drew close to one whose friendship, in spite of all later jarrings of opinion, retained a deep and vital influence over him. Addison had not yet graduated as the chosen champion of the Whigs in literature: but he was already the member of the Whig coterie whose sanity of judgment, and whose tutored genius gave him amongst the brotherhood a weight that no other had. He had ended his work as bear-leader: he was now attacking the town, whither he had come with the reputation of a scholarship as polished, and a wit as fine, as any that belonged to the coterie of Christ Church: but tainted by none of their malignancy of faction. He had just published his volume of Italian travels, and the copy which he presented to Swift is still preserved in Mr. Forster's library, with the inscription,

*“ To Dr. Jonathan Swift,
The most agreeable companion,
The Truest Friend,
And the Greatest Genius of his Age,
This Book is presented by his most
Humble servant the Authour.”*¹

¹ Mr. Forster infers not rashly, that he who wrote these words at least suspected the authorship of the *Tale of a Tub*. The words contain more than a conventional compliment.

The feeling that existed between the two is clear enough from such words, used by one who weighed their meaning well. In later years Swift would recall their meetings : how they talked long into the night, so engrossed in one another that they sought no third companion in their talk.¹ In all Swift's experience, was there one other man, who filled the place that Addison might have filled for him? In all the circle that bowed down to Addison, was there one who could, or did, perform that office of adviser, at once critical and appreciative, in which Swift might have done so much for Addison's future fame? We know how both regretted later alienations, how they strove to overlook them, how they inveighed against the violence of party that kept men asunder. But now they were close friends, admiring, with the generosity of genius, the gifts that belonged to each. In the little notebooks of personal expenses which Swift kept with care and regularity, and several of which accident has preserved for us, we find the companionship marked by many an entry that records their meetings.²

There were others too, in the circle. Congreve was knit to Swift not by the brotherhood of wit only, but by the associations with the old school at Kilkenny, where both had been educated under the shadow of the castle of the Ormonds. Congreve was now in the zenith of his fame : not yet what he afterwards

¹ Delany's *Observations*, p. 32.

² Thus : "Tav^{rn}, Addison, 2s. 6d. ; Tavⁿ, Addison, 1s. ; Tav^{rn}, Addisⁿ, 4s. 9d.," and so on : see note-books in the Forster Library at South Kensington.

became, the battered beau and spoilt favourite of a lady¹ of rank, who took her pastime in literature; but still the most brilliant wit, the most facile comedian, and the choicest boon companion of the day. Prior, with all his slipshod laxity, and his pursuit of a tattered and counterfeit fashion, was keen enough in his appreciation of genius, to know that one a head and shoulders higher than his surroundings was come amongst them, and he cultivated the friendship of Swift accordingly. Ambrose Philips, the author of the *Pastorals*, gibbeted to a not very enviable immortality by the nickname of Namby-Pamby, and by the mention he found in Pope's satire at a far later day, was now by the accident of political comradeship admitted to the friendship of Swift.² Another of the circle was Richard Steele, hereafter to come to close quarters with Swift, and to emerge from the combat, after proving how small a man of real genius might make himself appear. Vanbrugh, who joined considerable power as a comedian with occasional aberrations in the direction of architecture and heraldry, had already become the butt of what was, for Swift, no unkindly satire on the tiny edifice he had raised on the ruins of Whitehall,—a house whose

¹ The story of poor Congreve's blind and gouty decadence, when under the degrading patronage of the daughter and heiress of the great Duke of Marlborough, he became a pampered doll, to be replaced after death by a puppet fashioned after his likeness, is a familiar one. We shall find, hereafter, that Swift's friendship did not wane, even under the clouds of political dissension, and when Congreve had lost all but the memory of his power to charm.

² Of Philips we shall hear more when he crosses Swift's horizon, as the secretary of Archbishop Boulter, when the Drapier was a name dreaded in all the circles of orthodox Whiggism.

weight, Swift asserted, was enough to tax the strength of no less than four sturdy porters.

Swift, lodging, most probably, as we know was his habit in later years, in some of the suburban purlieus of St. James's, had already become a notable figure in this company, which met at Will's Coffee-House in Bow Street, or in the St. James's Coffee-House, where the Whigs at that time most resorted. First, a few had heard of the uncouth Irishman, tamed by Sir William Temple, with eccentricities which it was amusing to exaggerate. Then, he had entered the arena of political controversy: had returned with some triumph from the fray, and was patronized by the leading official Whigs, from whom the literary clique were prepared to take their cue. Next he became known as the author of various occasional pieces, each with its own peculiar strokes of humour or of grace. The *Tale of a Tub* indeed found an audience which was both wide and appreciative: but its authorship was a matter of hazardous guesswork except to a very few. Certainly known as the author of some of these pieces, and vaguely credited with the authorship of more, Swift had just the sort of reputation that would gain him a ready reception amongst the wits, to whom his indifference as to literary fame was some recommendation, as it precluded rivalry. In later years Swift, with his usual cynical candour, professed that his literary efforts were directed to gaining the social distinction which was not his by birth.¹ But his cynicism stands

¹ "I will farther tell you that all my endeavours from a boy

convicted of inconsistency by the fact that in these years when social distinction had to be gained, he relinquished that which might have come from acknowledging what he had written. From first to last Swift's attitude to his literary work is as strange as much else that puzzles us in his conduct. Keenly anxious about the fortune of his books, keenly alive to the criticism with which they meet, he is yet careless as to the method of their appearance. Ambitious of power, and willing to use every means of increasing his influence, he yet keeps up a mystery, more or less constant, about the authorship of them all. Conscious of the help which money gives to independence, and gradually increasing in his attention to it, he nevertheless neglects, in almost every instance, the pecuniary gain which authorship might have brought.¹ From first to last, with all his changes of mood, Swift's authorship is a thing of accident, pursued with no certain aim, regulated by no fixed idea, despising rules either of expediency or of art.

A story is told of his first entry into one of the haunts of the wits, which we may take to have been

to distinguish myself, were only for want of a title and fortune, that I might be used like a lord by those who have an opinion of my parts: whether right or wrong, it is no great matter; and so the reputation of wit or great learning does the office of a blue ribband, or of a coach and six horses."—*Swift to Pope*, April 5, 1729.

¹ "I never got a farthing by anything I writ, except one about eight years ago, and that was by Mr. Pope's prudent management for me."—*Swift to Pulteney*, May 12, 1735. This was *Gulliver's Travels*, the copyright of which seems to have been bought by Motte for £300. The *Miscellanies* which Swift and Pope published, about the same time as *Gulliver*, also yielded some profit: but Swift resigned it to Pope.

the St. James's Coffee-House.¹ Those who frequented the place had been astonished day after day by the entry of a clergyman, unknown to any there, who laid his hat on the table, and strode up and down the room with a rapid step, heeding no one and absorbed in his own thoughts. His strange manner earned him, unknown as he was to all, the name of the "mad parson." On one evening in particular, Addison and the rest were watching him, when he was observed to cast his eyes on a country gentleman who had just entered the tavern. At length he approached, and abruptly addressed him, within earshot of the listening circle. "Pray, sir," said Swift, "do you remember any good weather in the world?" The countryman stared, but recovering himself, presently answered, "Yes, sir, I thank God, I remember a great deal of good weather in my time."—"That is more," said Swift, "than I can say: I never remember any weather that was not too hot, or too cold: too wet, or too dry: but, however God Almighty contrives it, at the end of the year 'tis all very well." and with these words he left the astonished crowd as usual. The story is told on the authority of Ambrose Philips: and anticipating as it does, the wayward humour, and impetuous eccentricities of Swift's later days, it serves to tell something of the impression that Swift left amongst his friends of these early and little known days.

¹ Sheridan tells it as of Button's, the coffee-house in Russell Street, Covent Garden, where Addison "gave his little senate laws": but Button's was not established till 1712.

Of the humorous pieces which he had now produced, and which were all that employed his activity during these years of waiting and watching, there are three which are characteristic enough to deserve special notice. One of these is a parody of the eminently respectable Robert Boyle, whose *Moral Meditations* had proved too much for the patience of Swift, when compelled to read them aloud as a pious sedative to the Lady Berkeley. To scoff at the lady's chosen counsellor might prove inconvenient: so Swift hit upon the device of inserting his own manuscript in the volume, and reading, as one of the discourses, a *Meditation on a Broom-Stick*, moralizing with the gravest comedy over the vicissitudes that attend its lot. It served as well as any of the discourses which it parodied, to attune the aristocratic listener to a sedate and soothing condition of pious satisfaction: and when detected, showed the estimate that Swift had formed of the discourses clearly enough to release him from the drudgery of reading them. Evanescient as was its occasion, it is significant that one of Swift's earliest skits should have been directed against what was, or appeared to him to be, pious cant. Another piece, already alluded to, consists of some light, and not ill-natured ridicule of the house that Vanbrugh, the comedian, herald, and Royal architect, had built for himself on a part of the site of Whitehall. A version of the lines earlier than that which was afterwards published, was discovered by Mr. Forster at Narford,¹ and by him certain verses, before unprinted,

¹ Narford, in Norfolk, is the residence of the family descended

have been reproduced. In either version, the main object is not the ridicule of the tiny house which it pleased Vanbrugh's fancy to build: but rather the corruption of the contemporary stage, and the feebleness of contemporary wit. The printed version seems to differ from that discovered by Mr. Forster, chiefly, if not entirely, in the greater clearness of the purpose, the smoother flow of humour, the excision of what was tawdry and obscure. The pigmy structure, which has replaced the palace of Whitehall, is taken as a type of modern pretentiousness:

“ Like Bacehus thou, as Poets feign
 Thy mother burnt, art born again ;
 Born like a Phœnix from the flame :
 But neither bulk nor shape the same ;
 As Animals of largest Size,
 Corrupt to Maggots, Worms, and Flies,
 A type of Modern Wit and Style,
 The Rubbish of an Ancient Pile.
 So Chymists boast, they have a power
 From the dead ashes of a flower,
 Some faint resemblance to produce ;
 But not the virtue, taste or juice.
 So modern Rhymers wisely blast,
 The poetry of Ages past,¹
 Which after they have overthrown,
 They from its Ruins build their own.”

The remaining piece that claims notice as char-

from Sir Andrew Fountaine, often mentioned in the *Journal*, as an intimate of Swift, both in London and in Dublin under Lord Pembroke's lieutenantancy.

¹ It is worth noting here, as well as more than once in the *Tale of a Tub*, how Swift returns to the depreciation of the Moderns as compared with the Ancients, showing that however casual might have been the occasion of the *Battle of the Books*, the view it supported continued to be cherished by Swift.

acteristic of this period of his life, is one that is almost unique amongst the efforts of his pen—the *Baucis and Philemon*. Unlike his later style, it contains from first to last scarcely a touch of satire: the whole piece depends simply and entirely on its grace, and facility, and marvellous deftness of description. The old story of mythology, adapted from Ovid, is translated into a modern dress, but with skilful avoidance of all appearance of mere burlesque. Of this poem, also, Mr. Forster found at Narford a version with considerable differences from that which was published: and to these differences some added interest belongs. The hand of Addison was known¹ to have been exercised on the poem, and his obliterations and excisions were accepted by Swift with a magnanimity which few authors are strong enough to show. The changes, it appears, were chiefly in the direction of shortening: and this shortening was accomplished, as the Narford manuscript shows, by cutting out many strokes that gave vigour and force to the description. In the first version, the reception of the Hermits, “Saints by trade,” in the village where their miracle was to be wrought, gives a much more vivid picture of the villagers, disturbed by the begging of “two sturdy rascals” with their usual “stroller’s cant”; the hospitality of Yeoman Philemon and Goody Baucis is drawn with more fulness of

¹ As a proof of Swift’s readiness to listen to admonition, Dr. Delany repeats the fact, “which Swift himself was often wont to mention, that in a poem of not two hundred lines (*Baucis and Philemon*) Mr. Addison made him blot out fourscore, add fourscore, and alter fourscore.”—*Observations*, p. 19.

detail: and the metamorphosis of the pair into the parson and the parson's wife, and of their kitchen into the parish church, is even more lively than it was as published. Addison doubtless applied to the piece some canon of taste which Swift respected, in spite of its divergence from his own. But whatever changes it suffered, the piece remains as that where Swift's wit is perhaps in happiest operation, sportive, light, and fanciful, and with no suspicion of bitterness. As a rule, his wit plays only in lambent flashes against a cloudy and murky background: here it is in bright sunshine. Such playful, and only half-sarcastic, strokes as it contains are aimed at his own profession, but with nothing of unkindliness. Yeoman Philemon alters in little more, when he becomes the parson, than the pudding sleeves and length of skirt that are added to his grazier's coat. His tone is just the same, although he prates now of tithes and dues instead of crops; and learns how to shake his head over his pipe, and read the news, with due professional orthodoxy of sentiment:—

“Against Dissenters would repine,
And stood up firm for Right Divine.”

The writer of these lines, it is worth noticing, is no bigoted High Church Tory. So easily does the piece flow, so ready is its versification, so terse and telling its description, that we scarcely notice, in first reading, how many are the touches drawn from Swift's observation of the country villages through which he passed on his way between Holyhead and Leicester,

Farnham and London. We have the homely pair: their kitchen with its furniture, its walls adorned with chapman's ballads, that after the transformation furnish out the quaint devices common on the walls of the country church. In half a dozen lines we have a complete picture of the parson over his pipe and newspaper, performing christenings and acting as the centre of the village gossip:

“A shambling awkward gait he took,
With a demure dejected look,
Talkt of his offerings, tithes and dues,
Could smoke and drink and read the news;
Found his head filled with many a system,
But classic authors—he ne'er mist 'em.”

And lastly we have old Goodman Dobson, “of the Green,” prating of the village story from noon to night, trotting off to show to newcomers the twin yew-trees, that served as indubitable proofs of its veraciousness, and gathering round him on Sunday, for weekly practice, a crowd of familiar auditors to hear the old tale repeated. The whole picture might be drawn from the life, as he saw it on the village green of some Surrey or Leicestershire village.

During the whole of 1706, and down to the late autumn of 1707, Swift remained in Ireland. In mid-summer, 1706, John Temple, writing to Swift to consult him about his Irish estates, had invited him to Moor Park. Swift replies to the inquiries in a tone that shows how much he had already considered the evils of Ireland. He urges Temple to avoid rack rent: and goes on: “I forgot to tell you that no

accounts from your tenants can be relied on. If they paid you but a peppercorn a year, they would be readier to ask abatement than to offer an advance. It is the universal maxim throughout the kingdom. I have known them fling up a lease, and next day give a fine to have it back again. It has not been known in the memory of man that an Irish tenant ever once spoke truth to his landlord." He turns aside, rather than refuses, the invitation.

"I am extremely obliged," he says, "by your kind invitation to Moor Park, which no time will make me forget and love less. If I love Ireland better than I did, it is because we are nearer related, for I am deeply allied to its poverty. My little revenue is sunk two parts in three, and the third in arrear. Therefore if I come to Moor Park, it must be on foot: but then comes another difficulty, that I carry double the flesh you saw about me at London, to which I have no manner of title, having neither purchased it by luxury, nor good humour. . . . Whig and Tory has spoiled all that was tolerable here, by mixing with private friendship and conversation, and ruining both; though it seems to me full as pertinent to quarrel about Copernicus and Ptolomee, as about my Lord Treasurer, and Lord Rochester; at least for any private man, and especially in our remote scene. I am sorry we begin to resemble England only in its defects. About seven years ago frogs were imported here, and thrive very well; and three years after, a certain great man brought over Whig and Tory, which suit the soil admirably."¹

Meanwhile these months, that Swift spent quietly in Ireland, were full, in the larger world, of great events. The session of Parliament which had closed so auspiciously for the Whigs in the spring of 1706, had been followed by a summer as full of success.

¹ Mr. Forster printed this letter, dated June 15, 1706, for the first time.

In April Marlborough had set out for the Hague; before a month was gone he had added another, in Ramillies, to the now long list of victories which might have seemed to justify a war even less reasonable than that on which England was engaged.

Addresses of congratulation poured in from all sides; and on June 27, St. Paul's was the scene of another of the usual Thanksgivings. In September, a new disaster befell the French arms in the battle of Turin: and the campaign in Italy cost Louis not less than 20,000 men. Each new disaster to the enemy seemed to open new opportunities for turning the war into one of aggression, and for strengthening the Whig supremacy by opening up new vistas of national ambition. In October Louis found himself obliged to make overtures for peace: but they were coldly received: the reply was long delayed: and when it came, it proposed conditions which closed all prospects of a speedy end to the war.

When Parliament met, on the 3rd of December, the Ministry found themselves as yet confronted with hardly any opposition. Addresses from both Houses encouraged the war, in spite of murmurings that were now heard through the country. The Duke of Marlborough received lavish additions to his already long list of honours and rewards. Even in Convocation, the High Church opponents of the Ministry seemed to be hushed, and the Lower House assented, all but unanimously, to a Whiggish address which was drawn up by the Bishops. A display of the spoils of victory was made in procession to the Guild-

hall : supplies were liberally voted : and on the 31st of December (1706) Parliament adjourned for a short recess, leaving the Ministers on the full tide of apparent popularity.

But as the session went on, after the recess, signs of opposition began to arise. The Union with Scotland, pressed forward with feverish urgency, greatly stimulated that opposition. It was disliked because it seemed to involve an insult to the Church, to introduce a jarring chord into the Constitution, to promise an influx of needy members to both Houses, ready on payment of a bribe to be the henchmen of Ministers. The English mob was jealous, and stung to the quick by the coyness with which the poorer nation had met the advances of her wealthier sister. The Tories took up the cause of the Church so threatened. A New Act for the Security of the English Church was passed, which, as a protest against the compact with Presbytery, gave a certain consistency to the Tory party ; but this was the only effect of their struggle. In spite of all protests, the Union became law.

But new difficulties soon met the Ministers. The suspicions of the Church party became stronger ; their alliance with the Tories became more close. Even in Ireland the same tendency prevailed. The Church of Ireland, which, at the beginning of Queen Anne's reign, had conceived new hopes, and had found itself, as it believed, triumphant over the Presbyterians, was now suspicious of the Government, and these suspicions became more decided when the Duke

of Ormond gave place to Lord Pembroke, who in June, 1707, assumed the office of Lord-Lieutenant.

Pembroke's antecedents gave sufficient indication of his political inclinations. He had fallen under the displeasure of the Court in the halcyon days of Toryism under Charles II. In the Revolution he had taken a prominent part. He was the friend of Locke, and to him the *Treatise on the Human Understanding* had been dedicated, at a time when Locke's name was the foremost amongst the men whose views were more advanced than those which any political party dared to avow. He had held high office as a diplomat, and wide travel and liberal culture had left their imprint on him. From Italy he had brought those choice antiques which began the glories of Wilton. Such a man was not likely to penetrate too deeply into Irish politics, or to trouble himself too much with the battles of the sects. He came avowedly to heal or gloze over difficulties which Swift and those who thought with him had no wish to minimise. But his easy *bonhomie* prevented differences of opinion from becoming too violent. He came to Ireland with even more than that usual display of courtly munificence by which the progress of the Viceroy to Dublin was always marked. He lavished bounties of more than two thousand pounds even on the English towns through which he passed.¹ The same munificence was repeated on his visits to the more remote districts of Ireland. Such displays, contemptuous rather than complimentary, satisfied

¹ See Delany's *Observations*, p. 212.

the consciences of the English Governors of the country.

In his opening address to Parliament Pembroke followed the usual precedents of recent years. The Queen, he declared, "would be glad of any expedient for strengthening the interest of her Protestant subjects in Ireland." This was a well-understood formula, and was meant only to suggest the abolition of any Presbyterian disabilities. The Episcopalians refused to assist in this method of strengthening Protestantism: and Parliament was deaf to the invitation. Roman Catholic disabilities were increased: but those of the Presbyterians were not removed. His mission having failed, Pembroke closed the Parliament and went back to England in November, 1707.

In the train of the Viceroy, Swift returned to England. As with Lord Berkeley and the Duke of Ormond, so even in larger measure with Lord Pembroke, he had been on easy terms at the Castle. His life had run smoothly in the lively society of Dublin, where his Prebend of St. Patrick's and his footing at the Castle, caused him often to be, and where, in spite of his grumblings, he found abundance of congenial friendship. The two brothers Ashe, one his tutor in old days at Trinity, and his adviser in more than one of the darker passages of his life, the other the blithe punster, Dilly Ashe, who will turn up again in Swift's more noted days: the Dean of St. Patrick's, Dr. Sterne, famous for his dinners, by whose promotion room was one day to be made for Swift; Sir Andrew Fountaine, who had come from

Norfolk in the Lord-Lieutenant's train, and whose close intimacy with Swift, begun at Will's, was now strengthened: these, with Dr. Raymond of Trim, the poor economist, but kindly friend, and Archdeacon Walls, the business adviser of Swift, formed the circle amongst whom Swift moved in these earlier Dublin days. Pembroke himself sought their company, and entered cordially into its amusements; amongst which not the least was their zealous rivalry in punning.¹ It was by a pun that Swift began his intimacy with the Viceroy himself;² and the "Castilian language" as Swift calls their elaborate tricks of orthography, became a favourite amusement of the little society that gathered round the inner circle of Pembroke's household.³ When he left Ireland with the Viceroy

¹ This punning proclivity is the first, amongst a number of similar methods of trifling, by which Swift relieved more serious thoughts. Compared with those that followed it, the dog-Latin and the perverted spelling of the correspondence with Sheridan, the practical joking which the gossips describe as belonging to his later Dublin days, and the rhymed and jesting fragments which indiscriminating tradition has preserved, the puns are almost dignified. But even as puns they are not often amusing. All these methods of trifling are in Swift's case too clearly the results of a strain perforce relaxed, to have real humour. Swift's vein of humour never becomes visible save when it works with something more than verbal quibbles and conceits. The latter are interesting only as giving us the biographical fact, that the strain of Swift's passion and the force of his clear intellect, relieved their tensivity with little thought of dignity in relaxation.

² Swift had found Lord Pembroke undergoing a long lecture on what his lecturer called "the commonwealth of bees." "They are a very ancient nation," said Swift; "Moses numbered the *Hivites* amongst the nations Joshua was to conquer."—Delany, *Observations*, p. 212.

³ Specimens of this "Castilian" language are given in a MS. dialogue by Swift, which Mr. Forster found at Narford, and some passages of which he has reproduced. They illustrate the easy

in November, 1707, he bade farewell to the easiest period of his life.

With this return to England, Swift begins what is a long, and for him, an eventful visit. Political affairs were at a critical turn when he arrived. Pembroke had been brought back to join the naval council of Prince George of Denmark, whose growing infirmities were aggravated by the anxieties about the Navy, whose nominal head he was. On this and on other points, the Ministry were finding it hard to resist attacks. Parliament had now been sitting for a month. An attack upon the Ministers was opened, which proceeded upon the topics of the decay of trade, the failure of English arms in Spain, and, above all, the neglect of the fleet. This time not Haversham only murmured in his spleen, and Rochester and Nottingham in the fury of their Tory zeal. For once, Wharton and Somers were on the same side. The Whigs were no longer to be temporized with. Either the Ministers must throw them over, or must proclaim clearly, in the face of the world, their alliance with the Whigs, and their breach with the Tories. They were forced to choose the latter. The Whig junta was the master of the situation.

Swift came, on a commission from Archbishop King, to wage for his Church the battle for the First-Fruits and the Twentieth parts of the Church benefices—a battle that cost him for some years much

and careless talk that whiled away hours at the Castle. But they reflect Swift's humour only at its worst; and could be of little interest save to those who from familiarity caught the hints they were meant to convey.

labour, and earned but little thanks. If secured at all, these could be gained, as they had been for England, only by political favour. It was Swift's business, therefore, to watch the complexion of politics, and to learn how he might make the best terms for his Church. On his way to London, he stops, as usual, to visit his mother at Leicester: and writing¹ to Archbishop King from Leicester on the 6th of December, 1707, he tells him something of the prevailing political feeling as he finds it there. Rents may be slack in coming in: but "this long war has here occasioned no fall of lands nor much poverty among any sort of people": and, "there is a universal love of the present Government, and few animosities except upon elections," of which he happened to see one on his arrival. It only serves as a text for his usual contemptuous complaint of party. "The parties," he says here, "are as usual—High and Low: there is not a chamber-maid, prentice, or school-boy in the town, but what is warmly engaged on one side or the other."

Swift made his application, as a Whig, to what was now a Whig Government. The business of his Church moved but ill. He had little power to act, and was ill backed up by others, upon whom, as he thought, a heavier obligation lay. But the increasing influence of his friends of the past, Lord Somers and Lord Halifax, seems to be on the point of gaining some very tangible advantage for Swift himself. In

¹ The letter was printed, for the first time, by Mr. Forster, from the Records of Armagh.

January 170⁸₇, the Bishopric of Waterford was vacant: and his claims were urged, or were believed by Swift to have been urged, upon the Government, by Lord Somers,¹ whose voice, at this juncture, it was hardly possible for the Government to disregard. Never, even in the time of his highest influence, did Swift come nearer, in his own belief, to one of the prizes in the Church. In a letter to Archdeacon Walls² of January 22, he speaks with unquestionable bitterness of the appointment that has been made, of a certain Dr. Thomas Milles. "I once," he admits, "had a glimpse that things would have gone otherwise. But now I must retire to my morals, and pretend to be wholly without ambition, and to resign with patience." His hopes were dispelled;³ but he could still look to Lord Somers as his friend: he still refused to surrender all belief in the flimsy promises of Lord Halifax: and it was certain that if these two had the will, their power to help him was increasing. Before many months were gone, Somers was to become Lord President: and in the next year, Swift seeks, through Lord Halifax, to obtain from Lord Somers, as Lord President, the aid for his claims to the see of Cork, which he believed that he had for

¹ This is made perfectly clear by the letters from Swift to Lord Halifax of June 13, and Nov. 13, 1709, which were first printed (one with a wrong date) in Cunningham's edition of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, vol. iii. p. 201. See also Forster's *Life of Swift*, p. 211.

² Amongst Mr. Murray's MSS., but printed almost entirely by Mr. Forster.

³ "The Court and the Archbishop of Canterbury," he writes, "were strongly engaged for another person (*i.e.* himself) not much suspected in Ireland."—*Swift to Archbishop King*, Feb. 5, 170⁹₇.

his claims to that of Waterford when Lord Somers was the unrecognized, although real, master of the Government.¹

If that Government still hesitated about the expediency of avowing Whig principles and striking an alliance with the Whig leaders, circumstances soon decided them. Vague rumours arose of an attempt of the Pretender, which were realized and dissipated, at the same moment, in March, 170 $\frac{8}{7}$. On the 11th of February, Robert Harley, who had joined the Government only recently as Secretary of State, and one of whose clerks had just before been involved in a charge of treasonable correspondence with France, was dismissed.² The dismissal was in reality a retribution for a hazardous game that Harley had played. Already he had arranged that compact with Mrs. Masham which, two years later, was to produce events so full of consequence. The compact had miscarried for the present. But, as Swift wrote to King,

¹ Letter to Lord Halifax, Nov. 13, 1709. The Bishop of Cork was then ill of a spotted fever of which he died : while Dr. South, whose benefice Swift most desired, did not die till 1716.

² The attempt to involve Harley in the guilt of this obscure and petty traitor, William Greg, was a spiteful and unworthy piece of malice. Greg's story illustrates clearly enough the hap-hazard method of conducting public business which prevailed. He had been employed in various capacities : and his work, like his pay, was casual and irregular. He was in debt, anxious to make money, and careless how he made it. From Greg's own account we see how correspondence of the most confidential sort was patched up late at night, at an hour when Harley, as a rule, was drunk : and how the bad French of the secretary's letters was corrected by this needy and ill-paid clerk. Harley at the most was careless : poor Greg seems to have shown as much honesty as could fairly be expected : and if anything did leak out, it was due to carelessness and to the rotten system. Swift afterwards wrote a defence of Harley against the charge.

“though his project has miscarried, it is reckoned the greatest piece of court skill that has been acted these many years.”¹ Harcourt and Henry St. John followed Harley: a new recruit, destined to rise to greater things, was attached in Robert Walpole; and when the year 1708 had fairly begun, the Government was purged of any remnant of Toryism.² The change strengthened the Ministry, and the elections in April (1708) were again in their favour. Murmurings, no doubt, were heard. Writing to Archdeacon Walls on January 22, 1708,³ Swift had so far changed since his letter in December to Archbishop King as to say, “the people begin to be heartily weary of the war”; and similar symptoms were to be seen elsewhere. But the summer campaign brought a new success in Oudenarde: and the murmurers were silenced for the time.

Swift had, meanwhile, been doing what he could for himself and for his Church. When he had come up to London from Leicester in the beginning of the year, he had joined his friend, Sir Andrew Fountaine, in his house at Leicester Fields, and through him Swift hoped to gain, with more ease, Lord Pembroke’s aid for the application of his Church. But it soon

¹ *Swift to Archbishop King*, Feb. 12, 1708.

² Swift’s own correspondence, clearly based on good authority, shows us how narrow the turn of affairs was. Harley was satisfied that he had gained the day, and that Godolphin was going. It was only when the Duke of Somerset, at the Council, refused to sit with Harley, that the Queen yielded and dismissed him. It is curious that it was the same Duke of Somerset whose sudden appearance in the Council was largely instrumental in procuring the fall of St. John, in 1714.

³ MS. belonging to Mr. Murray.

appeared that this was to be bought only at the cost of concession to the Presbyterians in Ireland in the matter of the Test. Swift would listen to no such bargain. Five years before, he had written to Tisdall, speaking with nothing but contempt of the Nonconformists' schemes, as too futile to be worth opposing. But his relation to them had now become more marked. He saw more clearly the danger of their claims, and the increasing support which these claims found from the Government. He never hesitated as to his attitude in the face of this new danger. In the Irish Convocation he had been the chief opponent of any repeal of the Test. His friend and diocesan, Archbishop King, was equally decided. Swift would counsel no bargaining away of privileges for money: but he might still hope that the bargain would prove unnecessary. Sooner than others, he saw the weak points of the Whig oligarchy. Schemes, like that of Harley, might not miscarry again. The Whigs might go to lengths which would alienate from them many of their own party.¹ Swift continued to press his application on behalf of the Church: and to do so, not, indeed, as the opponent of the Ministry, but yet with full determination not to pay for the countenance of the Ministers, by ignoble surrender of her privileges.

But much of his attention as was absorbed with knotty questions of politics, and with struggles into

¹ "If they carry things too far I shall go to Vienna or even to Laracor, rather than fall in with them."—*Swift to Walls*, Nov. 9, 1708. Mr. Murray's MS.

which he was gradually being drawn, Swift found time for other thoughts. He renewed his former intimacy with Addison, now Under-Secretary in Lord Sunderland's office, and drawing the reward of well-timed eulogy in a comfortable official salary.¹ In literature, too, Swift was not quite idle. One of the few pieces that he wrote was that on the *Trritical Faculties of the Mind*, a playful parody of the would-be erudite and philosophical treatises that traded on trite quotations, and in their profundity lost all thread of sequence. Nonsense never wore, on first sight, a dress apparently so reasonable and so profound.

With his friends, in Ireland, he all this while maintained a correspondence in which lesser matters were mingled with affairs of Church and State. Sterne, the Dean of St. Patrick's, was at this time Swift's intimate friend, and with him was carried on a correspondence that was half friendly, half official. The Deanery had been the centre of a generous hospitality, marked even amongst the hospitalities of Dublin: and Swift follows with interest the building operations on which its present master was now engaged, and which were to result in that rambling mansion in time to be occupied by Swift himself. He will have nothing to do with the upholstering:

¹ Delany tells a story of the two which is characteristic enough, and which interests us the more that it must have been related by Swift to Delany in far later days. They happened to discuss their tastes on scriptural characters: and it was with some shame at the suspicions that it might have inspired in a listener, of a mutual flattery, that they blushed to find themselves praising, Addison the name of Jonathan, Swift that of Joseph.—Delany's *Observations*, p. 33.

but on the garden he wishes to give his advice, as a subject with which he is conversant, and he begs that the Dean will wait for his return before arranging his plans. Laracor had made him an adept in the art.¹ But civilities like these are only excuses for graver hints. The Test has to be supported and efforts for its repeal have to be resisted. Sterne must organize that resistance. The bishops are too selfish to do anything for the Church: and the stubborn and inert dulness of the Irish clergy, blind to the opportunity and thinking only of the present, must be aroused to some sense of danger. Others are active enough: it must be the Church's task to keep the Government in the right path.

The wheels of his mission drave heavily. For him, as for other suitors, the alarm of the French invasion had been made an excuse for delay. With difficulty, by the intercession of Lord Sunderland, the keenest and most truculent of Whigs, and of Lord Somers, now the chief support of the Ministry, he obtained access to the Lord Treasurer, Godolphin.² From this first meeting, Swift's antipathy to Godolphin would seem to date. Looking at the two men, we can hardly wonder at it. The dull and pompous dignity, the pervading mediocrity of Godolphin were as vinegar to Swift. From the first he saw through those empty platitudes; the impression of which is carried down to our own day by the insipid features

¹ *Swift to Dean Sterne*, April 15, 1708.

² In June, 1708 (see *Swift's Letter to Archbishop King*, June 10, 1708).

that look out at us from Godolphin's portraits. The antipathy would be as strong on Godolphin's side. In the ordinary courtly phrases that cloak unwillingness to act, he expressed himself to Swift as wanting power, as only passive in the matter: the real power, he urged, lay with the Lord-Lieutenant, to whom, if Swift pleased, he would repeat what Swift had said. This was doubly offensive to Swift: it meant nothing, and was a palpable pushing aside of his request. But it also hinted more: that Swift was come from Ireland unbefriended and unauthorised, with no means of access to that Lord-Lieutenant, whose intimate boon companion he had been. Swift answered that he was well known to his Excellency, and that his present object was only to secure the Lord Treasurer's good will: that, indeed, any mention of the matter to Lord Pembroke, might place him in the awkward position of appearing to slight that lord.

Driven thus into a corner, Godolphin was compelled to speak to the question. He did it with what was, for him, more than usual plainness. He might advise, so he told Swift, the granting of the First-Fruits, if only he were sure that proper acknowledgment was to be made. What that acknowledgment was, Swift could very well understand, but Godolphin would not more fully explain. It clearly meant the giving up of the Test, and the swallowing of all Whig principles entire by the clergy of Ireland. Such an acknowledgment Swift neither could nor would give: and thus the interview ended.

Swift's disgust at the delay, the pompousness, the enigmatic utterances of the Lord Treasurer, was not lessened when he found himself deceived either by Godolphin or by Pembroke. The deceits of Ministers may sometimes serve useful purposes of their own: they always give food for laughter to those whom they believe their dupes. Pembroke told Swift that he, and he only, was in charge of the matter under the Queen: Godolphin now told him that *he* had the papers and that the matter had long been before *him*. Between the two, Swift could only wait and indulge his contempt, in suspense: and do what he could to save his Church from the odium of a suspected Toryism, without allowing her to drift into adopting all the maxims of the Whiggish creed.

At times the point seemed to be gained. Swift was made to believe that the First-Fruits and Twentieth parts were actually granted, and he informed the Archbishop of the fact. When the hottest months came on and London emptied, all the world waiting for the result of the siege of Lille, that was to decide the future of the war, Swift went with the world into the country. For six weeks he was absent in Kent,¹ and then returned for a few days to town before going to the fashionable resort of Epsom, where the Court went to drink the waters. On the evening he came to town from Kent, the news of

¹ He writes on the 20th of October, to Ambrose Philips, whose feeble verse and facile time-serving had not yet disgusted Swift, to say how pleased he is to hear of Philips' arrival, and how he hopes soon to join him in town. The letter was first printed by Nichols in his *Illustrations of Literature* (iv. 730).

Prince George's death on the 28th of October (1708) greeted him. The changes that followed contributed largely to the new attitude which Swift soon assumed, and to the new energy with which he now applied himself, after these years of doubt and hesitation, to defend the views he held.

CHAPTER VI

SWIFT'S VIEWS ON CHURCH AND STATE MATURED

October, 1708—June, 1709

ÆTAT. 41

Swift waiting for the issue of the struggle—Results of the death of Prince George—Changes in the Ministry—Wharton as Lord-Lientenant—A scandal refuted—Swift drawing farther from the Whigs—The question of the Test in Ireland—The *Letter on the Sacramental Test*—The change in Swift's views—"In suspense"—Failure of his mission—Leaves London in disgust—Last visit to his mother—Back in Ireland—Other Literary work of the year—*Argument against Abolishing Christianity*—Its scope and meaning—*Project for the Advancement of Religion*—Its biographical importance—*The Sentiments of a Church-of-England-Man*—The principles it upholds—Swift on Despotism and Anarchy—His conception of Liberty—The humorous work of the year—*The Predictions for 1708*—The jokes on Partridge and their sequels—Bickerstaff on his defence—Bickerstaff in the *Tutler*—The *Apology for the Tale of a Tub*—Social incidents of his English visit—The circle of his friends—His picture by Jervas, in his prime.

IN the last chapter we saw Swift watching the shifting phases of the political struggle, and, as he watched, standing purposely aloof from all active interference. Meanwhile he cultivates the literary friendships that he had already formed, fills his leisure with the careless exercise of his lighter humour, or,

passing to Laracor, busies himself with the quiet occupations that his garden and his canal afforded. Already Swift felt himself to be out of joint with the Whig party. Soon he ceased to wait for the issue of the party struggle. The period of suspense was ending: that of active interference was near at hand.

The death of Prince George of Denmark, which Swift learned on returning from his visit to the country, in October, 1708, was an epoch in the party struggle. It left the poor Queen, the only pathos in whose life is her utter loneliness, without the one tie which had at least apparent sincerity in it. Brainless, dull, and incompetent as he was, the Prince had at least more motive to be true to her interest than the crowd of hungry cormorants whose effusive adulation only thinly cloaked the speculations in which they discounted the results of her death. But sad as the loss was for her, it was a gain to the Ministers. It checked complaints about the naval administration. It gave places for new Whig adherents. Lord Pembroke was brought to the Admiralty, leaving room for Lord Somers as Lord President, and for Lord Wharton, as Governor of Ireland. No appointments could have marked more conclusively the Whig alliance of the Ministers. Pembroke, says Swift, had need of all his philosophy to console him for these changes: "He takes all things mighty well," says Swift, "and we pun together as usual; and he either makes the best use, or the best appearance with his philosophy of any man I ever knew."¹ To

¹ *Swift to Dean Sterne*, Nov. 30, 1708.

Swift, already disliking Wharton, and, as it seems, distrusting Somers, the changes really involved a new, and distasteful, Ministry.¹

But a story has been told of his relations to Wharton, which involves a charge of baseness and ingratitude against Swift. That he detested Wharton most cordially is clear: but could it be asserted with truth that Swift poured out all the bitterness of his satire only because Wharton refused to him a post for which he supplicated, we should have to shape Swift's character anew. Yet Dr. Salter of Charterhouse long after published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*,

¹ Swift had not yet conceived the bitter intensity of hatred for Wharton of which he has left the proof in words that burn still: but that he had suspicions is perfectly clear (see especially his letter to Archbishop King of Nov. 30, 1708). That letter has been strangely misinterpreted. From beginning to end it is clearly written in a spirit of strong antagonism to the Presbyterians, and of equally strong suspicion of the inclinations of the Ministers to help the Presbyterians. In a previous letter, the Archbishop had advised Swift to come over with Wharton. Swift here speaks of the chaplaincy, and the manner in which it has been filled up: adding "Your friend (*i.e.* Swift himself) made no application, for reasons left you to guess." He then speaks of "an affair at Drogheda, which is made a handle." Scott in a note explains this as referring to "some disputes in corporation affairs." In reality it referred to a complaint of some trifling hardship suffered by a Presbyterian minister (see Scott, viii. 353). "I hope you are prepared," Swift goes on, "to take off the Sacramental Test, because that will be a means to have it taken off here;" a sarcastic reference to what he deemed an ill tendency, likely to spread. Further on he speaks with evident irony of the "moderation," which Swift held to be wanton carelessness, of Wharton's secretary, who would go to church or meeting-house, indifferently. Scott quotes a note, in which Luson had expressed his surprise that Swift should have praised a Whig, and corrects it by saying that Swift now called himself a Whig. But in truth there is no praise, but only irony in the paragraph. Swift still tried to believe himself a Whig: but his detestation of the Church principles of the Whigs was becoming each day more strong.

a story, supported by letters which he asserted himself to have seen, to the effect that Swift had turned upon Wharton, because Wharton refused to make him chaplain at Lord Somers's intercession. He had seen, he says, Lord Somers's letters : he had seen Swift's original application and his letter of thanks for Somers's intercession : and finally he could vouch for Wharton's reply to the intercession, in the words : "My lord, we must not prefer these fellows : we have not character enough ourselves."

It might be enough to say that Salter himself appears to have been a man from whom common accuracy was not to be expected.¹ But fortunately, in this instance his falsity is proved. To begin with, Swift's first prejudice against Wharton was conceived at his earliest interview, shortly before the Earl went to Ireland—an interview that had been sought, only in order that Swift might lay before the Viceroy his application on behalf of the Irish Church.² Next, Swift denies, in a private letter (written without the least thought of meeting this scandal, which was not started till after his own death), that he made any application at all for the chaplaincy.³ Thirdly, he tells us himself of a letter from Lord Somers to Lord Wharton on his behalf : but he also tells us the fate of that letter. It was first of all refused by Swift :

¹ He is called by Bishop Percy "a very shallow coxcomb" : "a poor prattler," one whose character was sufficiently known to command little respect.

² See *Memoirs relating to the Change in the Queen's Ministry in 1710* : Scott, iii. 189. See also *Swift to Archbishop King*, March 26, 1709.

³ *Swift to Archbishop King*, Nov. 30, 1708.

when left by Lord Somers at Swift's lodgings, it was not given by him to Lord Wharton before his departure from London: and when it was finally delivered in Dublin, Swift "immediately withdrew," as if to show that he desired to reap no advantage from it.¹ During the autumn of the next year, he continued to keep at a distance from the vice-regal court, although on good terms with Addison, who was Wharton's secretary.² Finally he writes to Lord Halifax, in November, 1709,³ recalling with gratitude Lord Somers's previous countenance, and trusting it may continue, but showing no such impatience as would argue disappointment and distrust; nor referring in any way whatever to an affair the impression of which would have been fresh in his mind had it ever happened as reported.

The calumny is of a type common in the life of Swift. Its only real foundation lay in the facts, that some friends had suggested to him the chaplaincy: that Lord Somers had possibly asked it for him, though against Swift's will: that Swift had thanked Somers for previous kindness: and that he turned, soon after, with bitter anger upon Wharton. For each of these facts there is the clearest explanation: but it has pleased slanderers of Swift to seize upon any plausible opportunity to satisfy their ill-will, by accusing him of acts the most unlike his character.

¹ *Memoirs relating to the Change*, etc. (Scott, iii. 190).

² *Ibid.* See also *Letter from Addison to Swift*, written in the autumn of 1709 (Scott, xv. 347).

³ The letter was first printed in Cunningham's edition of the *Lives of the Poets* (1854), vol. iii. p. 202.

Even slander, they forget, must have a certain appropriateness in its falsehoods, if it is not to be self-condemned. Intense as it was, Swift's bitterness could never be paltry.

But while Swift's sarcasm had no such ignoble origin, it is certain that Lord Wharton was the first to stir the full bitterness of his anger, and that his feeling towards Wharton hastened his breach with the Whigs. There were two motives now impelling him to this. He was angry that no progress was made with his petition for the First-Fruits : and he was afraid that the Whigs were seeking to confer favours on the Presbyterians, by the abolition of the Test. The former annoyed him partly on account of the slight laid upon himself ; the latter, solely because of the evil it would do to his Church. The Irish Dissenters were straining every nerve to undo the Act of 1703. The friends of the Church were anxious lest they might be successful. Swift was resolute against any yielding up of the principle of a Test ; and to this position he continued steadfast throughout his life. But he was still unprepared to break completely with the Whigs. So little is he inclined to any inconsistency of the kind, that he feels it needful, not to protest the fidelity of his political allegiance, but rather to represent to his friends that his attachment to the Whig party will never betray him into any abandonment of the privileges of the Church.¹

¹ "No prospect of making my fortune, shall ever prevail on me to go against what becomes a man of conscience and truth, and an entire friend to the established Church." Plainly, Swift expected to be classed as a Whig.—*Swift to Archbishop King*, Nov. 9, 1708.

Partly with the view of getting rid of the perplexities gathering round him, he turns his thoughts in a direction whimsical enough. Lord Berkeley is going as Envoy to Vienna, and Swift thinks of accepting his offer of the Secretaryship of the Legation. Anything—even Laracor—was better than to continue to be mixed up with the action of the Whigs, if they “carried things too far.”¹ To go to Vienna would give him breathing time. He would have the comfortable provision of two guineas a day : and he might wait for the ripening of events and the prospect of advancement in the Church without loss of principle. Lord Berkeley’s embassy, however, was abandoned, and Swift never set out on a mission which might have given so strangely different a colour to his life.

But at home, he was rendered every day more uneasy by the evident intentions of the Government : and in the month of December, 1708 (while still in London), he wrote the *Letter on the Sacramental Test*, in the character of an Irish member of Parliament, dating from Dublin. It was one of a series of tracts, which help us to appreciate Swift’s position at this time. Brought out with all his usual solicitude to conceal the authorship, the tract was readily enough recognized as his.² There was no mistaking its terms.

¹ *Swift to Archdeacon Walls*, Nov. 9, 1708 (Mr. Murray’s MS.)

² In his letter to Archbishop King, of 6th January, 170⁹, Swift makes an effort, it may be half-humorous, to disclaim the authorship, by speaking of the tract as one of which “some parts are very well, others puerile, and some facts, as I am informed, wrong represented.” The author, he says, has reflected upon Swift himself, as unfavourable to the Test. It is just possible that this may have been in the page which Morpew omitted in the edition

It was a clear challenge to those who wished to abolish the Test: a clear appeal to logic against toleration: a clear renunciation of party allegiance, if such a sacrifice of principle as the abandonment of the Test were demanded by that allegiance.

It is useless to deny that Swift's views had undergone a certain change from the day when he wrote to Tisdall¹ that it was not worth while to struggle with the Presbyterians: from the day when he began to write a pamphlet against the Bill which proposed to forbid Occasional Conformity,² and quoted Somers and Burnet, as authorities whose support of such conformity proved it to be advantageous for the Church.³ But it is grossly unjust to accuse Swift of any lack of principle in making the change. In the first place he now saw the Presbyterians vastly increased in power and in pretensions. Next, he found, or fancied that he found, the Whig party buying a political advantage by the bait of toleration to the Presbyterian Dissenters. With the advance of Presbyterianism, he saw its adherents renewing their old intolerance, which none, who remember the history of the Rebellion, could altogether forget.⁴ The

of 1711, and which cannot now be discovered. But it is more likely to be merely a *ruse* on the part of Swift. It did not deceive the Archbishop. In his letter to Swift of 10th February, he agrees with Swift's judgment concerning the tract—perhaps a little maliciously. But he goes on: "You need not be concerned: I will engage you will lose nothing by that paper." His belief as to the author could not well be more clearly expressed.

¹ *Swift to Tisdall*, Feb. 3, 170 $\frac{1}{2}$.

² *Ibidem*. See also *ante*, p. 127.

³ *Swift to Tisdall*, Dec. 16, 1703.

⁴ "I have been so very idle as to read above fifty pamphlets, written by as many Presbyterian divines, loudly disclaiming this

negotiations for the Union with Scotland—negotiations which Swift, like many others, watched with extreme distrust—showed that where Presbytery was strong it might be intolerant as ever. Swift was irritated, too, that toleration should be forced down the throats of an unwilling Irish Parliament, to suit the exigencies of an English party. Lastly, Swift knew that toleration in the mouth of the orthodox Whig, was a sham and a delusion; that it reached out to no logical conclusion; that it could be answered, as he answered it, by turning its own inferences against itself: that it was, in short, nothing but a party manœuvre, which sought in the ranks of dissent an ally against Tory hopes.

The Tract shows us what it was that tended to separate Swift from his Whig friends. It shows us also what was to be Swift's peculiar strength in controversy. Political treatises of the day varied from truculence to dulness. Here was one that threw around the details of technical politics the vigorous persuasiveness of humour. A new power had arisen in political controversy. The poetical satires of Dryden had lit up the arena with a meteoric flash;

idol Toleration, some of them calling it (I know not how properly) a Rag of Popery, and all agreeing it was to establish iniquity by Law. Now I would be glad to know when and where their successors have renounced this doctrine, and before what witnesses. Because methinks I should be loath to see my poor titular Bishop *in partibus* seized on by mistake in the dark for a Jesuit, or be forced myself to keep a chaplain disguised like my butler, and to steal to prayers in a back room, as my grandfather used in those times when the Church of England was malignant."—*A Letter concerning the Sacramental Test*. The "grandfather" is not merely a literary fiction.

but Swift, to a humour more keen than that of Dryden, to a style in its own way as trenchant as his, added the regulated skill of logical fence. From first to last there is not a sentence that does not tell: and yet there is not a sentence that is not absolutely direct and simple. The side touches are brought in, with admirable skill, not only to strengthen the argument, but also to point to other issues on which the writer wishes to show his thoughts, and to make suggestions which he leaves to do their work in the reader's mind. Thus the question of the Test leads him, almost by accident, to treat of the relation between Ireland and England: and in a single sentence of grave irony, he shows what he feels. The abolition of the Test, he says, as an Irishman addressing the English, may no doubt be for your advantage. If so, he is ready to exclaim in the words of Cowley to his mistress,

“Forbid it, Heaven, my life should be
Weighed with her least conveniency!”

If it be so, as we are ready to give our vitals to poultice a scratch on your finger, we must needs contribute, even by our ruin, to the advantage, ever so trifling, of our superiors. Only suffer us to believe that it is not absolutely for our own good: if we are to be your victims, vouchsafe us the unenvied consolation of martyrdom.

Uncasy in his political relations, Swift had other troubles. He was vexed by his old enemies of giddiness and deafness. His memorandum books,

during this winter of 1708-9, are filled with agonized references to these tortures.¹ All the year, he tells us, he was in England; and in another corner of the note-book, he has jotted down the words "In suspense."

He foresaw nothing but ill from Wharton's lord-lieutenancy; but matters had seemed to mend a little when Addison, as secretary, had assured Swift that no violent attempts were to be made upon the Test. The love between these two was now as strong as ever: and Swift recommends Addison most warmly to Archbishop King.² Both Swift and King seem to feel that the agitation against the Test had blown over. But in March of this year (170⁹₈) just before the new Viceroy went over, and when the Whigs were in the full tide of triumph, Swift's severance from them is made more imminent by his finding that he had been befooled and deceived as to the First-Fruits: and that, after having believed that the grant had actually been made, he had trusted to nothing better than a courtier's promise.³

Swift was irritated to the last degree. He despised the clumsy duplicity that aped the ways of statecraft, and he was indignant at the implied insult to himself. But he still refrained from an

¹ Thus: "Nov. From 6th to 16th, often giddy. God help me. . . . Dec. 5th. Horrible sick. 12th. Much better, thank God and M. D.'s prayers. 16th. Bad fit at Mrs. Barton's. 24th. Better: but dread a fit. . . . Jan. 21st. An ill fit: but not to excess. 29th. Out of order. . . . March. Headache frequent," and so on. The malady was clearly increasing.

² *Swift to Archbishop King*, January 6, 170⁹₈.

³ *Ibid.*, March 26, 1709.

outward or complete break with those by whom he had been misled. When Wharton set out, along with Addison, for Dublin, in the month of April (1709), Swift parted from them on apparently fair terms.¹ When Addison reached Chester, he found there a letter from Swift, which had overtaken him on the way, and which, as he said, "formed his only entertainment in that place."² It offered some new introduction, which might help to make Addison's stay at Dublin more pleasant, and might prevent any wide division between his friends and those of Swift.

Swift stayed on for a month longer in London. On the day before his departure (the 3rd of May), he called on the Whig Mæcenas, Halifax: and a slight but characteristic incident of the visit is recorded. Halifax never pleased Swift; something in the dapper self-satisfaction of the man repelled him no less than his insincerity. A little French book was lying on Halifax's table:³ Swift begged it as a gift. It was given; and Swift desired Halifax to remember that "it was the only favour he ever received from him or his party." On the back of a letter of unmeaning compliment which Swift, six months afterwards, received from Halifax, he wrote, in the bitterness of spirit that fast grew on him, "I

¹ In the previous month (March 24) Swift writes to Archbishop Marsh "by the command of the Lord-Lieutenant." Clearly there was then no open breach between Wharton and Swift, whatever their feelings.

² *Addison to Swift*, April 22, 1709.

³ The book was *Poésies Chrésiennes de Mons. Jollivet*.

kept this letter as a true original of courtiers and court promises."

Swift then quitted London, never to renew the same relations with those amongst whom he had hitherto moved. He set out first for Leicester, to pay what was to be his last visit to his mother, to whom he had clung with an affection so close, in spite of their years of separation. Of their intercourse in these later years we know little, save by the records of Swift's regular pilgrimages to his mother's house, and their constant interchange of letters, carefully noted in his memorandum books. By the help of these memorandum books, which preserve with peculiar vividness, though in fragmentary shape, the minute details of his life during certain periods, we can trace the very route of this journey. Starting from London on Thursday, the 3rd of May, he passes (probably going on horseback) by St. Albans, Dunstable, Newport, Northampton, and Harborough to Leicester. He lingers there for five weeks: and then starts by way of Burton-on-the-Hill, and Nantwich, for Chester, arriving there on the 14th of June. When he reached the coast he waited for an opportunity to cross. Addison, now in office at Dublin, seems to have secured for him a passage in the vice-regal yacht;¹ and Swift landed at Ringsend on the 30th of June. Without staying to greet his friends, or even Esther Johnson, who was now in Dublin, he hastened to bury himself at Laracor. Before this the society at the Castle had

¹ *Addison to Swift*, June 25, 1709.

attracted him ; now he was clearly anxious to mark how little he had in common with it ; and even Stella's presence in Dublin could not keep him near it.

The close of this visit of twenty months to England gives us an opportunity of reviewing the literary work on which he was then engaged, and the new incidents of his life in the society of London. Critical as it was in determining his political attitude, this period was also a turning-point in his literary career and in the growth of his influence over men.

Those of Swift's pamphlets which belong to this year, 1708, all reflect one and the same state of mind. That in which he dealt with the question of the Sacramental Test in Ireland, we have already considered. Side by side with this, there are three others : the *Argument against Abolishing Christianity*, the *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, and the *Sentiments of a Church-of-England-Man*.¹ The first is a masterpiece of his own peculiar humour, of which the others present scarcely a trace : but yet they all give evidence of the same views of religion and of politics. They tell us much of Swift's conception of religion, as a factor in society : a conception clear, definite, and masculine, if neither very elevated in speculation, nor very profound in devotion. It is the

¹ The full titles are :—*An Argument to prove that the Abolishing of Christianity in England may, as things now stand, be attended with some inconveniencies, and perhaps not produce those many good effects, proposed thereby : A Project for the Advancement of Religion, and Reformation of Manners, by a person of Quality : and The Sentiments of a Church-of-England-Man, with Respect to Religion and Government.*

conception of a politician much more than of a divine. His formal creed touched only the surface of the real religious feeling that underlay, and gave meaning to, his cynicism, no less than his tenderness. But he held that formal creed with what we may call a stern rigidity, and with no mere semblance of belief. He permitted himself no deviation from it, and such deviation he regarded in others as an impulse of anarchy, a will-o'-the-wisp of vain philosophy, or the hair-brained presumption of fools. Religion may have other and wider domains: he is concerned with it only as an instrument to tame the unruly, as a code which gives its sanction to morals, as a dogma which discourages the flimsy pretences of originality, and as a system that sets a limit to the pursuit of the unprofitable jargon of philosophy. In the *Tale of a Tub* he had given a loose rein to his humour in the treatment of religion: in the *Project for the Advancement of Religion* he deals with it as a system of police. Finding the subtlety of his humour misinterpreted, he is resolved to write so that the most prosaic could have no pretext for misinterpreting what he said.

It is curious, as supporting the view that Swift's separation from the Whigs was a gradual process, begun before he recognized it, and depending upon no personal or selfish motive, that, in after days, he looked back upon these tracts as bolts aimed at the Government of the day. He then felt as if the opinions they expressed had been out of harmony with the pronounced aims of Godolphin's Ministry.

But so far was this from being the case, that Swift was then reckoned, by others and by himself, as a Whig: and read apart from the light which his later life throws on them, the tracts have no party bias against the Whigs, unless the spirit of defiance shown on behalf of his own order were to be so interpreted.

The *Argument against Abolishing Christianity* has an interest far beyond that of any passing controversy. The sweep of its irony is as strong, as unrelenting, as unvarying, as that of a whirlwind. There is no fitful gust, no lapse into fretfulness or anger, no break in the perfection of the assumed tone of apology, and of judicial expostulation. But the apparent lightness of touch only thinly disguises the seriousness of the sarcasm. At the outset he ventures, with a semblance of timidity, to assert his dissent from the general consensus of opinion in favour of abolishing Christianity. But it is with the hesitation and modesty befitting one who holds a paradox so scandalous: and as if afraid of his own assertion, he hastens to guard against misinterpretation, by disclaiming any idea so insane as that of defending *real* Christianity, such as may at any time have produced an effect on men's belief and actions. This, indeed, is proper only for an uncivilized age: but its dangers, he thinks, are only so many arguments in favour of maintaining the conventional fiction that now prevails. If men are not allowed a God to revile and renounce, they may be tempted "to reflect upon the Ministry." That any real belief could be propagated

by accepting the fiction ought not to be asserted : it is a reflection upon the wisdom of the nation. The financial aspect of the question is doubtless an important one, but not so clearly decisive of the matter as would seem. No doubt it costs a good deal to maintain ten thousand parsons, and a score of bishops : but these parsons have their uses : their diet is moderate enough to let them breed a healthy progeny : and it may be well not to let the tainted wits and men of fashion reduce the world to one great hospital. Nor would these revenues suffice to keep a hundred gentlemen of fashion, as “easy” in their circumstances (for this is the cant phrase) as they must needs be on any fair calculation. The offer of such scanty support might even offend their dignity. As for the argument that one day in seven is lost by the practice of Christianity, this is paltry cavil. Sunday serves excellently for a dose of physic : the wits need not make the course of their life different on that day : and churches, even should they resort to them, serve the purposes of assignations, rather better than any other places that could be named.

But a stronger objection to Christianity remains behind. Religion gives rise to sect and party : and sect and party are certainly inconvenient. By all means, he is ready to admit, abolish Christianity if you will thereby destroy sects. But can you do so ? Is there nothing in human nature that would produce sects, even though Christianity had never been heard of ? If we abolish its name, can we be sure that the

plague will disappear? If there was no word for lying, would men be truthful? If diseases had no names, would men be sound? Will you satisfy Dissenters, if you throw down the walls, and let them enter at their own sweet will? Swift's answer tells much of his judgment on his fellow-men.

“To all this I answer: that there is one darling inclination of mankind, which usually affects to be a retainer to religion, though she be neither its parent, its godmother, nor its friend: I mean the spirit of opposition, that lived long before Christianity, and can easily subsist without it. Let us, for instance, examine wherein the opposition of sectaries among us consists: we shall find Christianity to have no share in it at all. Does the Gospel anywhere prescribe a starched squeezed countenance, a stiff, formal gait, a singularity of manners and habit, or any affected forms and modes of speech, different from the reasonable part of mankind? Yet if Christianity did not lend its name, to stand in the gap, and to employ or divert these humours, they must of necessity be spent in contraventions of the laws of the land, and disturbance of the public peace. There is a portion of enthusiasm assigned to every nature, which, if it hath not proper objects to work on, will burst out and set all into a flame. If the quiet of a state can be bought by only flinging men a few ceremonies to devour, it is a purchase no wise man would refuse.”

On the whole, he believes that he has ground for hesitating to accept the ordinary belief in the expediency of abolishing Christianity. “Whatever,” he goes on, “some may think of the great advantages to trade of this favourite scheme, I do very much apprehend, that in six months’ time, after the Act is passed for the extirpation of the Gospel, the Bank and East India Stock may fall at least one per cent. And since that is fifty times more than ever the

wisdom of our age thought fit to venture for the preservation of Christianity, there is no reason we should be at so great a loss, merely for the sake of destroying it."

Is the sarcasm here chiefly against the sceptic who would sweep away Christianity? Or is it against the conventional artificialities that pass for religion? Or is it against the essential shallowness of human nature that makes these artificialities all that we can compass? It would be hard to say: perhaps Swift himself scarcely knew which thought was uppermost. But the strength of his assault, whatever was its chief object, comes from the rigid tenacity of his creed. He made his service to his Church that of a soldier to his country,¹ and refused to look behind an order. The post was his to defend: and sarcasm was the weapon in his hands wherewith to guard it.

The *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, if it has less general interest, is of even more biographical importance. It is written in the character of a "Person of Quality,"² and is dedicated to Lady Berkeley, the

¹ "The want of belief is a defect which ought to be concealed, when it cannot be overcome." "I look upon myself, in the capacity of a clergyman, to be one appointed by Providence for defending a post assigned me."—*Thoughts on Religion*, Scott's 2nd edition, vol. viii. p. 55.

² There is a special interest in what Steele says of it in the *Tatler*, dating on April 20, 1709, from Will's Coffee-house. "This week being sacred to holy things, and no public diversions allowed, there has been taken notice of even here, a little Treatise, called 'A Project for the Advancement of Religion: dedicated to the Countess of Berkeley.' The title was so uncommon, and promised so peculiar a way of thinking, that every man here has read it, and as many as have done so, have approved it. It is written with the spirit of one who has seen the world enough to undervalue

wife of Swift's patron, for whose behoof the *Meditation on a Broom-Stick* had been written a few years before. For the first time Swift is, so far as we can tell, didactic and nothing else : but his didactic manner is unique. It is hard to say whether there is some lurking sarcasm, or whether the tract is written simply as it professes to be, to convey gravely a proposal for social reformation. We have no right to assume a sarcastic reference when none is even hinted at : but, on the other hand, we can scarcely avoid detecting some irony in its grave propounding of superficial remedies for sores that have eaten deep into the flesh. Virtue, according to his proposal, is to be propped up by religion : and both are to be ensured by a sort of habit, by a forced obedience to convention. Open disregard of morality is to be discouraged by social penalties, and so men are to become virtuous, by virtue becoming fashionable. Neglect of ordinances is to be punished, and so men are to become religious, by constraint. No one but Swift could have written in such a strain without degenerating into cant, or wearing his cynicism on his sleeve. Swift does neither. He clearly felt then, as he felt all his life long, that men were to be driven, not led :

it with good-breeding. The author must certainly be a man of wisdom as well as piety, and have spent much time in the exercise of both. The real causes of the decay of the interest of religion are set forth in a clear and lively manner, without unseasonable passions ; and the whole air of the book, as to the language, the sentiments and the reasonings, shows it was written by one whose virtue sits easy about him, and to whom vice is thoroughly contemptible. It was said by one of this company, alluding to that knowledge of the world the author seems to have, the man writes much like a gentleman, and goes to Heaven with a very good mien."

that they must be bidden to assume a virtue, if they had it not, and that to argue or speculate upon the grounds and motives of morality, was a waste of time. He lays bare, with an almost callous deliberation, the cankers of society—the abuses of the magistrature, the perversions of justice, the dishonesty of trade, the rascality of lawyers, the defects of education, and the vices of fashion. But having done so, he makes no perfervid appeal to higher principles. Obey rule and convention, be orderly, avoid giving scandal—this is the duty of the members of society: to enforce this, the duty of the civil magistrate. This is the lesson, he seems to say, which it is most expedient to teach: this the ideal, he seems to feel, which, poor as it may be, is the highest you can attain.

The tract obtained what was ever the foremost aim of Swift, the attention of his own day. Men of the world paused to listen to one who was felt, in the words of Steele, “to write like a gentleman, and to go to Heaven with a very good mien.” Swift knew that religion would never prevail by the cant of a false humility, or by a forced and technical style of its own, that proclaimed its alienation from ordinary humanity. With set purpose, then, he relinquished such tricks.

This and the *Letter on the Sacramental Test* are both more or less contentious. Directed against certain abuses in society, and certain errors in politics, they have the bold cut and slash of political polemics, even though they professedly spoke for no party at the moment. In the third of these pamphlets of 1708,

that on *The Sentiments of a Church-of-England-Man with respect to Religion and Government*, there is a judicial air scarcely to be paralleled in any other of Swift's works. It avowedly takes the same view of the religious question as that adopted in the *Project for the Advancement of Religion*. In the one as in the other, Swift spends little care or thought over the details of a creed, the spiritual conditions it produces, the emotions it excites, or the speculations upon which it rests. He is concerned only with its effect upon the conduct of the individual: with its place as a factor in society. In regard to religion he is perfectly definite. Dissenters are to have toleration, but toleration is not to be supposed to involve equality. He refuses to discuss the question of the abstract truth or falsehood of this or that creed; such a question would be foreign to his conception of the principle at stake. The expediency of State maintenance of religion was, as Swift knew, scarcely disputed by any in his day. But it was to be justified in principle only on the ground of the public welfare: and if the creed which the State maintained were not worthy of such preference as would exclude dissent, this justification vanished. Comprehension he treats as impossible: it would, as he shows, simply imply a re-casting of the national creed at each of the new departures of dissent. Such an argument rests upon foundations which would not now be currently accepted: but it is unquestionably logical so far as it goes. Its logic, however, discards all sympathy, either with religion, or with the speculations by which

religion may be affected: and treats of it only as a matter of State policy and nothing else.¹

But while Swift maintains thus rigidly the privileges of his Church, his creed involves no divine right in a hierarchy—admits, indeed, no other basis for it than expediency alone. So it is with State government. He exposes with admirable skill the fallacies upon which notions of divine right, and absolute prerogative, and the so-called sovereign power, are based.² He shows that Hobbes, in his defence of absolutism, was merely misled by terms: that in claiming supremacy for the sovereign power, he was only asserting what was inherent in the very name: but that he erred in identifying with the name the executive power vested in the monarch, rather than the legislative power which is properly supreme. He defends the theory of the Revolution, as implying the right of resistance, and shows that no theory can be invented for it, which can divest it of its real meaning of a re-grant of authority from the people. To us this may seem a truism: but in maintaining it we must not forget that Swift was defending what was, in his days, a hotly attacked position. He

¹ Swift did not, of course, professedly admit the principle that the Christian religion was a system of police, with whose abstract truth we were not concerned. He simply refused to discuss it, holding it as proved, for all practical purposes. He distinctly renounces, elsewhere, "the atheistical notion, that religion is only a contrivance of politicians for keeping the vulgar in awe."—*Examiner*, No. XXIX. But his rigid refusal to tolerate argument on the question, brought him nearer to the latter position than he would himself have been ready to admit.

² Fallacies which, as we shall find, he opposes with equal decision long afterwards, when he had passed through the ordeal of being a sworn confederate of Toryism.

exposes the absurdity of passive obedience: and unquestionably, so far, at least, as civil affairs are concerned, he dreads the non-resistance theories of the Tories, even more than the possible extravagances of the Whigs. Anarchy is better, he says, than despotism: "as much as a savage is a happier state of life than a slave at the oar."¹

But the pamphlet also makes clear—and this is no slight indication of Swift's attitude to his fellow-men—what it was that he understood by liberty. He was one of those to whom a real liberty, which outward forms may help or may destroy, but which they never can create, was the very breath of life. For this alone, Swift strove: but, more than once, as he struggled for it he fancied that he was struggling for popular liberty, with its strangely different aims. The objects and desires of that popular liberty, he, in his heart, despised. What he sought for, was a freedom of compelling assent to his own opinion, as implicit as he felt that his intellectual superiority deserved. The religion of the State could not really force Swift to limit the range of his own thought: but he had forced himself to recognize a dogmatic creed as expedient, and thus steeled himself against showing any tolerance for others' doubts. If their betters were not galled by dogma, Dissenters could not expect the State to submit its creed to their judgment, though exercised in the name of liberty.

¹ The inaccuracy of expression here is characteristic of Swift's prose. Terse and expressive as it is, it is often technically and grammatically incorrect.

It is much the same in the domain of civil government. In spite of his avowed dislike of tyranny, there are possible dangers in the Revolution against which he would guard. The sovereign, he says, must not place himself at the mercy of one political party. To do so would be to allow to faction too much power. But as, year by year, it became more evident that this was just what the Revolution had made inevitable, so Swift's sympathies, unconsciously to himself, took, with greater definiteness, an opposite course. He abhorred the power of an oligarchical faction, in his heart, far more than the arbitrary despotism of a monarch, which was already a thing of the past. Yet he still spoke of himself as resisting tyranny, when what he really resisted was the predominant success of the Whigs, with their sophisms and insincerities, with their specious pretences to be the defenders of the liberty, that, in the sense in which Swift understood the word, they really destroyed.¹

From these pamphlets, with their more serious bearing on the life of Swift, it is a relief to turn to a happier flight of his humour. In January or February of 170⁸/₇ he wrote his "*Predictions for the Year 1708.*" The occasion has been often told. John Partridge was a shoemaker who had practised successfully on the superstitions of the time, and had attained some notoriety, from the days of Charles II. down to those of Anne. He seems to have joined together the

¹ This tract, expressive as it is of Swift's views in 1708, should be compared with the Letter to Pope, written when he was looking back over a large part of his political career, in 1720. See Chap. XIII.

trades of quack, of extortioner, and of "philomath," which was the name by which he and his *confrères* imposed upon the vulgar. He was now the publisher of the *Merlinus Liberatus*, and had contrived to gain some notoriety, apparently even beyond the shores of England. Swift may have been irritated by the quackery of mountebanks such as Partridge: but more probably he merely saw in the popular superstition an opportunity for a stroke of humour. With the most demure gravity, he issued Predictions for the ensuing year, in the name of Isaac Bickerstaff, a surname he was said to have taken from a blacksmith's sign. He has no intention of discrediting astrology; but desires only to expose the absurdities of the pretended astrologers who have degraded the science as Partridge has done. They were vague and timid, and uttered prophecies which any turn of events could equally explain: but Bickerstaff is bold in the minuteness and detail of his information, giving the public, however, only an instalment of his lucubrations, and keeping others,—so deep is his sense of political responsibility—in reserve. He is not too positive. Like a wise prophet, he knows there are limits to his science, and that though the stars affect the inclination of men, their influence must at times yield to reason. He will not, therefore, assert too positively that his prophecies may not be subject to modifications, but in the main he will submit them to the speedy test of actual events. The first prophecy, he says, is indeed trifling enough: it relates merely to Partridge the almanac-maker.

"I have," says Bickerstaff, "consulted the stars of his nativity by my own rules, and find he will infallibly die upon the 29th of March next, about eleven at night, of a raging fever: therefore I advise him to consider of it, and settle his affairs in time."

This "trifle" is, of course, the central point of the piece: but Partridge finds himself in good company. The Archbishop of Paris is to die on the 4th of April: the Dauphin is to die of strangury on the 7th of May; and Louis XIV. himself is to die at six in the evening of the 29th of July. The stock of prophecies is liberal enough: and it is left for time to determine what is their truth.

It is hard to conceive how any one can have failed to detect the jest: but as a fact it was accepted in good faith. Swift followed it up forthwith by a *Letter to a Person of Honour*, in which Partridge's death on the 29th of March is described. His repentance is most edifying. He feels his end near, and "repents his fooleries from the very bottom of his heart." He explains, in the sincerity of a death-bed confession, how his almanac was constructed. He did it only because "he had no other way to gain his bread, and mending old shoes was a poor livelihood." He is troubled by the thought that he may have hurt even more by his quack physic, than by his false astrology.

The jest was now fully started: and it was carried on by other hands than Swift's, aided by the strange credulity that accepted Bickerstaff as real. The Inquisition in Portugal ordered his book to be burned.

The Stationers' Hall struck the dead Partridge from their rolls: and Partridge himself was furious, not at the travesty of his own predictions, but at the mistaken prophecies of Bickerstaff. Bickerstaff became the favourite of the town: and the most amusing contribution to the current topic was the answer published in Partridge's name under the title of *Squire Bickerstaff detected*. This was written most probably by Thomas Yalden,¹ with the assistance of Congreve, and possibly also of Nicholas Rowe. It is, in fact, no answer at all, but an indignant protest against the sufferings to which the hapless philomath has been subjected. He hears the bell tolling for him: the undertaker calls to arrange for the hangings: the sexton wants to know whether his grave is to be plain or bricked. His best friends expostulate with him on his unneighbourly conduct in keeping his death a secret even to them: and tell him that it looks a little like disaffection to the Church. It is indecent, they urge, that he should be frightening people at his window, when he ought to have been in his coffin these three hours. Worse and worse, when he ventures out, it is only to be dunned by the sexton and the undertaker for the expenses of his burial, or to be stared at, as a ghost.

¹ The Rev. Thomas Yalden was a fellow of Magdalen College, where he had as friends Addison and Sacheverell. A story seems to have been set on foot at Oxford, of some plagiarisms he had committed, from Congreve's poems: so he may also have been indebted to him for assistance in his prose. Yalden was afterwards involved for a time in the suspicion of being connected with Atterbury's plot. His chief distinction is his appearance in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*.

The Parish Clerk, "discreet and sober" as he is, has sent two or three times, and begged him to come and be buried decently, or else to produce a certificate of burial elsewhere, as the Act requires.

The jest might even now have died out, had not the veritable Partridge revived it, by his almanac for 1709. There he insisted on the denial of his death, with some vehemence: and decried the pretensions of the new claimant to astrological lore. This gave Swift another opportunity. Isaac Bickerstaff now wrote a tract in his own vindication, in his usual style of grave and moderate expostulation. Mr. Partridge might at least, he thinks, have been more civil in his language, when the point on which they differed was a merely speculative one. The cause of true philosophy is injured by such treatment: it has shocked the susceptibilities of the learned abroad. He has indeed been contradicted by a Frenchman. But can he be expected to stoop to vindicate himself against a Frenchman, a Papist, and an enemy? As for Mr. Partridge's denial of his own death, it is against all proof. A thousand readers of his almanac declare "that no man alive ever writ such damned stuff." Partridge's wife has herself said that he has "neither life nor soul." If an ill-informed carcase still walks about, and calls itself Partridge, is that Mr. Bickerstaff's fault? Partridge declares that he is alive now, and was so on the 29th of March. But surely this is cavilling: it implies that he need not have been living all through the interval: and that he was not so living is all that Bickerstaff said.

He cannot, out of regard to himself, refrain from a complaint of the *Letter to the Person of Honour*, that told of Partridge's death. Bickerstaff is there said to have made a mistake of four whole hours. He is sorry to have to refer to the matter: he would not willingly have thought about it further: but after careful inquiry he finds he was wrong, at the most, by half an hour. He hopes this need raise no clamour: but that the author will in future be a little more tender of other men's reputation as well as his own.

Thus ended the jest, so far as Swift and his friends were concerned, save for a short broadsheet which he issued in 1709, with a pretended black-letter prophecy of Merlin. Partridge was bewildered; but however ignorant Partridge continued to be, Swift's authorship was well known to his friends. Bickerstaff became his recognized title: and it was appropriated by Steele, with Swift's full permission, in order to make the fortune of the new venture on which Steele was now starting, in the *Tatler*.¹ From April, 1709, till January, 1710, the lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff kept the attention of the town. Swift aided his friend, sometimes with hints, sometimes with actual contributions: and when he issued the first volume, Steele acknowledged the help he had received from

¹ "It happened very luckily that a little before I had resolved upon this design, a gentleman had written predictions and two or three pieces in my name, which had rendered it famous through all parts of Europe; and by an inimitable spirit and humour, raised it to as high a pitch of reputation as it could possibly arrive at."—Dedication to first volume of the *Tatler*. Steele was rash enough soon to call down that humour on himself.

the borrowing of the name. In closing the whole series, Steele again referred, and this time by name, to Swift, to whose "uncommon way of thinking" and to the "peculiar turn of whose conversation" he was so much indebted.¹ It is by such casual words of description as these, that we can appreciate the sort of estimate which Swift's humour extorted from his contemporaries.

Just before he quitted England, Swift was occupied with another literary episode. The *Tale of a Tub* had already run through four editions: and a fifth was about to be issued by Tooke. It did not actually appear till 1710, but the *Apology* which was published in it, for the first time, is dated June, 1709. Swift allows the immaturity and possible rashness of his work. But he will not allow that it was irreverent: he will not allow that his treatment of religion is objectionable to any for whose judgment he cares. He dwells on his defence with something of iteration. He even condescends to explain allusions, and to interpret his irony. He shows that free ridicule of false pretensions is no new thing in dealing with religion: that it had been the express object, amongst others, of the author² of the letter on Enthusiasm, which had attracted so much notice on its appearance in 1708.

To those who have attacked it, he shows, generally,

¹ Preface to fourth volume of the *Tatler*.

² The third Earl of Shaftesbury. His authorship was still anonymous: and Swift curiously enough ascribes the Letter, which in the *Apology* he says he never read, to his friend Colonel Hunter, the Governor of Virginia. — *Swift to Colonel Hunter*, Jan. 12, 1709.

the leniency of contempt. They are, he says, with necessary consciousness of his own genius, "like annuals that grow about a young tree, and seem to vie with it for a summer, but fall and die with the leaves in autumn, and are never heard of more." The horse-play of William King,¹ the civilian, who had written some rough remarks on the *Tale*, did not prevent Swift's later kindness to the author; and the attempt moves him only to a mild expostulation with King, for having "writ against the conviction of his own talent, and entered upon one of the wrongest attempts in nature, to turn into ridicule, by a week's labour, a work which had cost so much time, and met with so much success in ridiculing others." To Wotton,² his more erudite opponent, he is ready to pardon his invective: his comments have, says Swift with quiet irony, done much service in elucidation.

We have lingered over his political relations and his literary occupations, during a period so critical. But his social life also, stands out, side by side with this, in much vividness of detail. Early in his own visit, Esther Johnson had come with Rebecca Dingley for some months to London. It was the last time that she visited England, and we know of her visit³

¹ This is the second of the trio of William Kings, who come across Swift's path. He was an easy and somewhat slipshod wit, who had joined the Christ Church faction in the Boyle and Bentley controversy, and who was afterwards joined with Swift in the *Examiner*, and profited by his patronage when in need. We shall come across him again.

² See above, Chap. IV.

³ This visit was unnoticed by Swift's biographers, until Mr. Forster brought it to light, by means of Mr. Murray's MSS.

only by Swift's casual reference to it in a letter to Archdeacon Walls, on the 22nd of January, 170 $\frac{8}{7}$,¹ and again in a letter to Dean Sterne,² where he speaks of Stella's dog Pug, and his escapades when they took him to Greenwich Park. Addison, Steele, Congreve, Rowe, and Prior, were all amongst his friends; Lord Berkeley and his family were in the immediate neighbourhood of London, in their classic home at Cranford.³ Anthony Henley of the Grange vouchsafed his friendship; and Halifax, once the fellow-worker, now the patron, of literary men, attempted, as we have seen, without much success, to make Swift succumb to his influence, and pay incense at his shrine. Colonel Hunter, now in Paris, but named as Governor of Virginia, was, when absent, a constant correspondent of Swift, and, when in London, a member of the same circle. In a jesting way, when the hopes of the Vienna secretaryship were disappearing, Swift talks of becoming Hunter's Bishop in his Government of Virginia.

Already, during this visit, we come across the name of Mrs. Vanhomrigh, the fashionable widow of a Dutch merchant, whose fortune had been made in

¹ Mr. Murray's MSS. "The ladies of St. Mary's," he writes to Walls, "are well, and talk of going to Ireland in spring. But Mrs. Johnson cannot make a pun, if she might have the weight of it in gold."

² *Swift to Dean Sterne*, April 15, 1708.

³ Scott prints a letter from Lord Berkeley to Swift, inviting him to Cranford, and urging him to give a copy of a work he had just completed to the Archbishop of York for presentation to the Queen. It is curious that Scott, who rightly conjectures the book to have been the *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, did not see that the date of 1705 for the letter was obviously wrong. Forster (p. 213) shows that it ought to have been 1708.

Dublin. It is noted frequently in Swift's memorandum book amongst those of his partners at ombre and picquet. Mistress Barton, too, the niece of Sir Isaac Newton, was amongst those who submitted, with due respect and humility, to the tyranny of his friendship: and Mistress Long, the reigning Whig toast at the Kit-cat club, of whose fate we shall hear more, was another of his lady friends, who claimed at first special exemption from the rules which he dictatorially imposed, that "advances should be made to him by all the ladies who claimed his acquaintance"; but who was compelled, after due hearing of her cause before Mrs. Vanhomrigh's son, to subscribe to a treaty of submission.¹

These same note-books give us other little characteristic traits. The memory of his former poverty taught him to be scrupulously careful in the records of his expenses. The items of his small gains and losses over the picquet table; the cost of his board and lodging: every little incidental payment—are all noted from week to week. Narrow as was his income, he spent less still: and his total outgoings for a quarter, seldom exceed £30. He keeps a careful record of his correspondents—Archbishop King, Dr. Ashe of Clogher, Mistress Johnson, Mistress Dingley, Raymond of Trim, Dean Sterne, and Archbishop Marsh: Addison, Fountaine, and Steele—all

¹ Swift states his claim in a letter to Miss Hoadley (June 4, 1734), and in one to the Duchess of Queensberry (Nov. 19, 1730). The decree of Mistress Long's submission was printed in a stray volume, published in 1719, containing *Letters found in the Cabinet of Mrs. Anne Long*.

these appear, most of them frequently, in the list. We can trace him even to Ranelagh Gardens; and to the opera, where, like the *Spectator* three years later, he went with a protest against what he deemed a fashionable folly of the day.¹ "We are nine times madder after operas than ever," he writes to Hunter: and not long after,² he tells him that he designs to set up a party among the wits to run them down next winter, if true English caprice does not save him the trouble by a speedier change of taste.

It was during this visit of 1708 that he sat to Jervas, then the newest fashionable painter, for the portrait which gives us what is clearly the best picture of him in his prime.³ In later years cynicism, enduring sadness, and increasing disease wore away the sprightliness of aspect that belonged to him: and as the Dictator of St. Patrick's, he bore a look that is disagreeable in its overstrained haughtiness—a look which in a lesser man one would have been inclined even to call one of insolence. In the Deanery at St.

¹ In the mixed jargon of English and Italian which then disfigured the operatic stage, there must have been much incitement to ridicule. Swift's lines

"Strange! all this difference should be,
Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee"

were written on the rival pretensions of Handel and Bononcini. In the *Argument against Abolishing Christianity* he suggests that parties in favour of Margarita and of Valentini might form very good substitutes for religious sects.

² *Swift to Colonel Hunter*, March 22, 1709.

³ This is the picture now in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, where it fitly hangs beside that of Prior, and opposite to the pictures of Pope and Samuel Butler. It was presented to the University by Alderman Barber in 1739. See *Scott's Swift*, xix. 191.

Patrick's, and at Howth Castle, there are portraits of Swift, taken long after this, when the *Drapiér* bore dictatorial sway in Dublin :¹ and in both of these we see the domineering sneer with which he accepted the incense of a nation whose applause he despised even while he courted it. The brightness, the keen eye of the ready combatant, the freedom of the humourist, all are gone ; and we see instead a man whose hopes are dead, to whom life has yielded chiefly the withered leaves of cynicism, and who, with a sort of studied carelessness, accepts the power that has fallen to his lot, in a sphere beyond whose narrow confines he had once borne sway. There is another picture,² which appears in Lord Orrery's *Remarks*, which is clearly one of Swift in his later days, just before he entered on the dark valley that for him preceded death. In it we see the anguish, the loneliness, the despair of one who sounded depths in human nature that he feels would have been better unexplored, and who stands gazing, as it were, into a future which is overcast by dread of coming ill. Another portrait is one taken from a cast after death, when that later placidity which, we are told, belonged to his appearance in the second infancy of old age,³ had passed away, and there remained only the distorted wreck that partial paralysis, preceding death, had left.⁴

¹ They seem to have been both from the same original by Bindon, taken for Lord Howth in 1735. Scott's *Swift*, xviii. 343.

² Drawn by B. Wilson and reproduced in 1751, from an etching, in Orrery's *Remarks* ; reproduced in vol. ii. of this edition.

³ By Mrs. Pendarves in her *Antobiography*.

⁴ The picture is reproduced in the worthless compilation, with

It is in the picture by Jervas, however, painted during this visit, that we see Swift in his prime, and it is clearly from this aspect of him that Roubiliac modelled the later bust which has been reproduced as the frontispiece to this volume. The first characteristic of the face is its keen and nervous force. The features are large and finely formed, with an unusual fulness of curve in lip and chin and nostril. Nowhere in the face is there repose. The eye, even in spite of the heavy eyebrow, is prominent. Its look, as it struck contemporaries, could change at will from the sweetness and archness of azure blue, which it wore to Pope, into something black and threatening that struck the gazer dumb—as Vanessa knew. The lurking corners of the mouth tell of humour, subtle, lively, quick: only there is lacking the calm that gives to humour time to germinate, the light that shines from the inner recess where creation takes body and shape, and that inspires the dramatist or poet. But now he was in the full flush of strength. He had proved his mettle in controversy: he had scaled heights of humour untouched before: he had made himself felt as a power in the State. Material rewards might be withheld from him, but the disappointment seemed rather to put him on his mettle. It pleased Swift to fancy that his passions were calm, and that he was proof against emotion. If it was really so, it would only mean that strong

the title of "*Swiftiana*," which Wilson produced nearly sixty years after Swift's death. It appears also in the first volume of Nichols' edition of the works.

intellectual antagonisms deadened the sense of the emotions that accompanied them, and forced him into a repression of these emotions, that was fatal to his peace. No one can look at the portrait of Swift in his prime, to the almost exuberant fulness of curve, and to the nervous energy which lightens up the features, without feeling that passions and emotions are there. But passion, chained and condemned and done to death, was forced to throw itself into the whirl of ceaseless intellectual fight.

There is little in the portrait, as there was little probably that attracted the attention of Swift's ordinary acquaintance, to tell of the ravages of disease. Those ravages were already present, but as yet they were only intermittent. Outwardly indeed, Swift's health was good. He had a powerful and muscular physique. The stories of his walks, of his constant violent exercise, of his coolness and intrepidity when threatened with personal violence, prove that his estimate of his own strength was not mistaken, though, by a fatal error, it drove him to a regimen that encouraged the disease. In all his ailments, his only idea of a cure seems to have been to drive out some superabundant energy by forcing himself to overstrained physical exercise. He lived hard, in the sense that he drew largely on his strength, and seemed ever to be striving to tame his energies into exhaustion, rather than to conserve and regulate them into useful servants. But as yet the dire effects of such self-torture were not visible: and Swift was, as his portrait shows him, a man in the prime of

life, and in the vigour of an almost superabundant strength ; knowing his own powers, and yet without the bitterness of those later antipathies, which checked the free flow of the gracious kindness that endeared him to a circle such as gathered at Will's or at the St. James's Coffee-House, in these earlier years.

CHAPTER VII

THE FALL OF THE WHIGS

June, 1709—September, 1710

ÆTAT. 42

Swift at Laracor—Thoughts of promotion—The position of the Government—Pressure of the War—Sacheverell's sermon—His previous career—The offending topics—Godolphin as Volpone—Sacheverell's impeachment—Feelings of the nation—The trial—Unpopularity of the Government—Marlborough's demand to be made Captain-General for life—The Duchess of Marlborough and the Queen—The Whigs losing ground—Swift at Laracor—The attack upon the Test—His tract against the Government, on the election of Irish Speaker—His mother's death—Correspondence with Tooke—Dismissal of Sunderland—The Whigs in despair—Godolphin's fall—Swift's return, to find a "new world," in September.

SWIFT had come back to his quiet home at Laracor, at midsummer, 1709, to watch political events for a while longer, from a distance. But however keenly larger political questions moved him, Swift was never guilty of the insincerity of affecting disregard for his own interests. Much as he suspected them, he had not relinquished all hope from the patronage of the Whigs; and from Ireland he sent two letters to the Whig Mæcenas, Halifax, to remind him of his

promises, and to suggest means whereby Halifax might, if he pleased, be useful. "Pray, my Lord," he adds in the postscript to the first,¹ "desire Dr. South to die about the fall of the leaf, for he has a prebend of Westminster, which will make me your neighbour, and a sinecure in the country, both in the Queen's gift, which my friends have often told me would fit me extremely: and forgive me one word which I know not what extorts from me; that if my Lord President (Somers) would in such a juncture think me worth laying any worth of his credit, you cannot think me persuaded that it would be a very easy matter to compass: and I have some sort of pretence, since the late King promised me a prebend of Westminster, when I petitioned him in pursuance of a recommendation I had from Sir William Temple."² He follows up the application again in November: and "if the gentle winter will not carry off Dr. South," he hopes his Lordship may move the Lord President, "to think on him for the Bishopric of Cork." There is something of a forced tone of

¹ That of June 13, 1709. Both this and the letter to Halifax which followed in November, were first printed by Cunningham in his edition of the *Lives of the Poets*, iii. 201: but he has mistaken the date of the June letter, which he has printed with the date of January.

² Mr. Fowle, the present incumbent of Islip, Oxfordshire, enables me to trace the "sinecure" which Swift coveted, as that of Islip, which was apparently the only benefice held by South. The present rectory house was built by South: and had he not outlived the period of Swift's influence either with Whig or Tory Ministers, it might have been Islip, instead of Laracor or St. Patrick's, that we should have associated with his name. The *Drapier* would never have been heard of: but Oxford could hardly have failed to feel the influence of such a neighbour as Swift.

compliment in both the letters, as if the application were made under a strain. The fact that it failed left Swift all the more free in his future choice of party.

The last cord that bound him to the Whigs seemed well-nigh broken when he parted from Addison. Addison stayed on till September, and then left with Lord Wharton for England. In the interval, he and Swift had seen much of one another.¹ It was then that Stella made his acquaintance, and discerned with a woman's quickness, that bland humouring even of what he deemed absurdities, that power of "assenting with civil leer," by which Addison preserved in all companies the serenity of an unruffled temper and avoided the pain of controversy.² Such a trait was hardly one in which he could find sympathy from Swift: but difference of temperament never weakened, even amid estrangement, their mutual respect; and the pitfall of political dissension had, for the present at least, been avoided.³

¹ The house now attached to the Botanical Garden of Glasnevin, is said to have been occupied by Addison, and by his biographer Tickell, whom we shall meet later on as one of Swift's Irish friends and correspondents. In the Botanic Garden there is a walk of ancient yew-trees which is still known as "Addison's Walk." The neighbourhood is rich in associations with Swift and his friends, including not only Addison and Tickell, but Parnell, the Bishop of Clogher, Dr. Delany, and Dr. Helsham. Of the house of the two latter, afterwards built at Delville, we shall hear more hereafter.

² "She was never positive in arguing," says Swift in his Character of Esther Johnson: "when she saw any of the company very warm in a wrong opinion, she was more inclined to confirm them in it than oppose them:" and he hazards the guess that she may have got the habit "from the same practice which she much liked in Mr. Addison."

³ There is a letter written by Swift to Ambrose Philips on Oct.

Meanwhile, in England politics were changing rapidly. Louis's overtures for peace had been met only by new demands. The French King appealed to his people in his famous letter to the Prelates of France and the Governors of Provinces. The French nation was roused : and a new lease of life was ensured to the war.

Success in the war, however, was not now so conspicuous. Its burden was more distinctly felt. Prices rose : scarcity was spreading. Orders in Council and prosecutions of the "forestallers and engrossers" of corn, were not sufficient to stem the evil. When the Ministers met Parliament in November, 1709, there was already much inarticulate discontent : and they soon increased it by their own rashness and persistency in error. To what follows Swift, in later days at least, ascribed their fall.¹

Just ten days before the opening of Parliament, on the 5th of November, a sermon had been preached before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen at St. Paul's, which, for no merit of its own, was to attract an attention and to work results, allotted to few produc-

30, 1709, which tells us something of his feelings at this time. He is cultivating half an acre of Irish bog : and reckoning "no man thoroughly miserable unless he be condemned to live in Ireland." "Yet I have not the spleen," he adds, "for I was not born to it." "You have," he goes on, "the best friend in the world, Mr. Addison, who is never at ease while any men of worth are not so ; and Mr. Steele is *alter ab illo* (another of his sort)."

¹ The whole tenor of the *Four Last Years of the Queen*, and of the *Change in the Queen's Ministry*, proves this. But even earlier, Swift (*Journal*, August 24, 1711) acknowledged how much the Tory ministers owed to Sacheverell, unwilling as they were to admit it.

tions of its class. The preacher was Dr. Sacheverell, of St. Saviour's, Southwark, to whom a good voice and a fine presence, with the most extreme of High Church doctrine, had already brought some notoriety. One sermon he had preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, on the 11th of September, 1707, upon the guilt and danger of presumptuous sins, in a style sometimes smart, but always vulgar, coarse, and tawdry, and often as regardless of grammar as of sense; trusting for attraction to that constant political reference which pleased the taste of the day. Speaking of hypocrisy, he cannot refrain from specifying a type of it, in "that quintessence of fanaticism, occasional conformity." It was a form of presumptuous sin against which few of his audience stood in need of warning.¹

Another sermon was preached by him in August of this year (1709), at the opening of the assizes at Derby. His vigour of style had rapidly increased, along with the directness of his political allusions. The subject was the "Communication of Sin": and the sin whose contagion is most clearly depicted, is that of dissent. "The execrable miscreants Arius and Socinus," he tells his audience, "rotten in their graves, still stink above the ground, and live again in a hellish transmigration of their damnable heresies." He calls up

¹ It seems strange that a University audience could have been pleased with a style which sought strength by touches such as this: "Old men, emerit in the Devil's service, left impotent and vanquished by wine and women, strive after vice with their decayed and rotten constitutions." Yet sentences even worse, which can hardly be quoted even in secular pages, are frequent. This fact, as showing the taste—or the leniency—of the day, must not be forgotten in judging of what to us is coarse in Swift's style.

for judgment "the atheistical monsters Hobbes and Spinoza, side by side with the illiterate and scandalous wretch Fox, with his diabolical Inspiration; and the two or three Jesuits in masquerade, who crept into a conventicle, and rose in a few years to grasp the crown and upset Church and State." The same hands, his audience were warned, were now at work.

But the sermon now under notice, and by far the most important in its fruits, is the one preached on the 5th of November, which was printed at the request of the Lord Mayor.¹ It bore the title of "*The Perils of False Brethren both in Church and State*," and was avowedly a party manifesto. Without actually impugning the Revolution, he strips off from it, so far as may be, all notion of resistance. He shows how the doctrine of Non-resistance has been implicitly affirmed by all the great authorities of the Church. He points to what he conceives to be the end and aim of all these schemes of toleration, linked as they are with figments of original contract, in "a wild negative idea of a national Church": a "heterogeneous incorporating mixture": "a pious idea of making our house of prayer a den of thieves." Those Dissenters, who had persecuted the Church, who had enjoyed their day of triumph, and who now had fallen, were anxious to slip in by a back door.

All this was a rough and reckless statement of the case; but we must see what was set forth by

¹ The Court of Aldermen refused to concur in the Lord Mayor's request. But the sermon had been printed before their refusal was known.

Sacheverell, if we are to judge how a change soon came over the spirit of the nation, and how that change had the sympathy of Swift. Neither he nor any moderate men sympathised with exaggerations like those of Sacheverell. But the High Church party had other and abler exponents than the preacher of St. Saviour's. It was gaining in its hold upon the nation, and in order to secure a majority, it had only to prove that the real and vital privileges of the Church were in danger. Swift might condemn the whims of such as Sacheverell in England and Higgins in Ireland, but this did not make him blind to dangers which gave force to Sacheverell's rhodomontade.

Even before the Government took any action, Sacheverell's sermon raised a ferment. The preacher was answered, argued with, denounced, and libelled. Some of the replies exposed his faulty logic, his halting grammar, and his gross vulgarity. But others thought it needful to accuse him of flagrant vice. In the *Modern Fanatic* he was made the mark for the vilest scurrility: lewdness, drunkenness, profane swearing, and treasonable tendencies, are only a few of the crimes laid to his charge. He is accused in one breath of undue haste in seeking the degree of Doctor of Divinity; of unfilial neglect which left his mother dependent upon charity for support: of possessing a sanguine complexion: and of habitual brawling. Such a confused mass of invective could have but one effect: it gained him a little sympathy, and much notoriety. The coping stone was put to the whole by the action of the Government, in his prosecution.

Two motives combined to prompt it : the Ministers felt themselves waning in popularity ; and they attributed the weakening of their position to the efforts of the High Church party. They made no distinction between the moderate Churchman who simply defended his own privileges, and the fanatic who discredited the Revolution, and all but advocated treason. They were determined to do all they could to discredit the whole Church party through Sacheverell and his exaggerations.

But in the case of Godolphin another motive was also at work. Volpone was the name which had been used by Ben Jonson, and was of common colloquial application, as a synonym for the man of fox-like cunning. Speaking of apparent, but false, friends, Sacheverell had said, "In what moving and lively colours does the Psalmist point out the crafty insidiousness of such wily Volpones." The reference to Godolphin was plain, from the already current application of the nickname to him : and forty years of statecraft had not made Godolphin strong enough to despise it. If the application were doubtful, it was made more prominent by the extraordinary awkwardness of Burnet, who referred to it, not obscurely, in the House of Lords.

Amongst Godolphin's colleagues, Somers, at least, dissuaded him from the prosecution. But wounded vanity prevailed. Mr. Dolben, a Whig henchman, was chosen to bring the obnoxious sermon under the notice of the House. The Commons resolved to impeach Sacheverell of high crimes and misdemeanours :

and the Ministers entered upon a struggle of their own making, in which the sense of the country was soon against them, in which they drove a mass of moderate men into new definiteness of opposition, and which ended in their own defeat.

When Parliament met again after the Christmas recess, the articles of impeachment were carried to the House of Lords. It was the end of February before the trial came on; and throughout the length of its solemn farce, the Court continued to be a sort of fashionable resort, in which the preacher provoked alternately the anger of his male audience by his insolence, and the sympathy of the ladies by his pathetic description of the danger that threatened his innocence. At length on the 23rd of March, judgment of three years' suspension was pronounced; the offending sermon was to be burnt by the hands of the hangman: and for a result like this, the Ministry had roused against them the general voice of the nation, and had all but given the death-blow to the hopes of the Protestant succession.

Sacheverell was now the popular hero. His name was everywhere toasted: crowds cheered him as he passed through the streets: the Ministry were hooted; and the Queen was greeted by cries that invoked her aid for "Church and 'Cheverel." At length open violence was used. The meeting-houses were wrecked: and dissent and occasional conformity were attacked, as the tools whereby the liberties of the Church and the nation were to be sacrificed to the exigencies of faction.

All this had little reason in it: and those who profited by it had probably little design of bringing it about. Sacheverell himself can have had no such ambitious aim. If any one man planned the result of the trial, that man was Atterbury—of all extreme High Churchmen the one most akin in sympathy to Swift. The defence delivered by Sacheverell, which was unquestionably the most effective part of the trial, was most probably from the hand of Atterbury himself.¹

To the mistake of this prosecution, another, even more serious, was added. The Duke of Marlborough, in a letter addressed to the Queen during the campaign, requested for himself the post of Captain-General for life. The claim was so astounding, as to rouse even the sluggish intellect, and submissive temper, of the Queen. Cowper had been consulted, and pronounced in no indistinct terms against the proposal. Argyll, with something of the melodramatic arrogance that distinguished him, undertook, if the proposal was pressed, to take Marlborough, dead or alive, at the head of his army. Marlborough showed here, and often on other occasions, that he

¹ The current account of the defence, as prepared by Atterbury, suggests another story told regarding Atterbury a few years later, by Thomas Gent, the printer of York, whose autobiography is noticed by Southey in his *Doctor*. Gent tells how about 1718, he was taken to "a monastic-looking building" at Westminster, to arrange for printing the defence of one Ken—sley, a clergyman: how he there saw a grave little man, in a black habit, who dictated the defence: and how he recognized his host some years after, when he went to see Bishop Atterbury driven in a coach to the Tower.—*Life of Thomas Gent*, edit. 1832, p. 87. *Secrecy and plotting* were as the breath of life to Atterbury.

stood altogether outside the range of English domestic politics: that the Constitution of his own country was a problem that he had never solved: and that to carry out his great project of French subjugation, he was blind enough to risk all his popularity on a project that no thinking Englishman could listen to without disgust. The decisive failure of his scheme did not prevent its causing a scare, nor make it a less effective weapon, hereafter, in the hands of Swift.

Meanwhile, the disputes between the Queen and the Duchess of Marlborough had now reached their last stage. The Queen, driven by personal insolence and tyranny on the one hand, alarmed for the Church and for the prerogative of her Crown on the other, sought help and relief from an intolerable incubus, and found it in Abigail Hill and Robert Harley.

When Parliament was prorogued, in spite of an apparent security of position, there was much to cause uneasiness to the Whigs. The shouts and bonfires of the London mob had reflected a feeling widespread through the country. The length of the war, the heavy burden of taxation, the distress in the agricultural districts, the undefined fear of unconstitutional schemes on the part of the Ministry; Marlborough's ambition; the dictation of the Whig junta; and the jealousy of Dissenting encroachments, —all swelled in volume till their force could no longer be ignored. They jarred on the Queen's warmest sympathies. In the nation at large, they roused a deep-lying antipathy to innovation. In the minds of all the moderate men, they kindled a

distrust of the Whigs. For such distrust, Swift's mind was already fully prepared.

The drunken mobs that pulled down Burgess's¹ chapel, shook their fists in the face of the Horse Guards, and were pursued through Lincoln's Inn Fields, Drury Lane, and Long Acre: that stopped the coaches in the streets, and forced the occupants to pledge Sacheverell's health,—had very little thought of the abstract propositions of Filmer or of Locke. Tory money may have been, as Burnet hints,² at the root of some of the excesses: but even Tory money could only use the occasion, not create it. Two years before, the same mobs had been burning the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender, in effigy, together, as the three symbols of the Tory faith. The current now carried the mob the other way.

Once roused, there was no mistaking the feeling. The Whigs were disconcerted: no Minister knew to which of his colleagues he could trust. The Tory party, including many who had but little sympathy with Sacheverell, were jubilant. A typical form of address was drawn up, and passed from one corporation to another. The Queen was assured of their loyalty to Crown and Church. It was hinted that better times might come, and present danger cease, if the Queen were to consult her people. Here and there, dissentient voices were heard, but on the whole, the unanimity was astonishing. When

¹ Burgess was a noted Dissenting preacher, who attained much celebrity in wider circles than those of his own sect.

² *History of his own Time*, p. 849, ed. 1838.

Sacheverell set out in May to take possession of a living in Shropshire to which he had been presented, his progress was made the occasion of showing how widespread was the reaction. At Oxford, at Banbury, at Warwick, at Shrewsbury and Ludlow, he was received as a conqueror returning from a successful campaign. Flags waved from the steeples, the streets were decked with flowers, and troops of yeomen and country gentlemen met him on horseback as he neared each town. When he alighted at his inn, the corporation came to pay their respects, and beg him to accept a gift of wine. The streets were crowded with holiday-makers, each wearing a white and gold rosette, with a gilt laurel leaf in the hat. If a Whiggish bishop or parson interfered to prevent the ringing of the bells, the mob seized the church, and locked the incumbent out. If the clappers of the bells were taken away, the hammer from the nearest smithy served to ring out a welcome to the doctor and his suite.

For all this, mad and reckless as it was, the Ministers had themselves to blame. Wavering Whigs went over to the other side. Marlborough and Godolphin found the factions opposed to them growing in strength. Anne was more and more inclined to listen to new whispers. The war continued, but its triumphs were more rare. Godolphin lost hope: Marlborough wrote letters of expostulation from the seat of war: and the Duchess, with her passionate violence, was daily widening the breach between her mistress and herself.

Such was the new world which Swift found around him, when he came back to England in September, 1710. Save for a visit to Bishop Ashe at Clogher in the previous November, he had spent his time between Dublin and Laracor.¹ In spring he had taken a prominent part as an opponent of the abolition of the Test. Brodrick, the Speaker, had just been appointed Lord Chief Justice, and the first act of the new Parliament, when it met in May, would be to elect his successor. The Court was pressing a candidate who was in favour of abolishing the Test: or, as the phrase ran, who desired to unite the Protestant interest in the kingdom. Swift wrote against the ministerial candidate, urging the majority not to be supine enough to let themselves be led by the views of the Governor, into accepting what their consciences disapproved.²

While he still lingered in his solitude at Laracor, he received, on the 10th of May, the news of his

¹ Throughout the whole of this stay in Ireland, he seems to have been contributing more or less regularly to Steele's *Tatler*. The earliest of the *Tatlers* printed amongst his works is that of June 18, 1709, which refers to the female Platonic Societies then in vogue, some specimens of which are described in John Bunce's whimsical memoirs. But it is hard to believe, in spite of Swift's power of disguise, that a piece so totally unlike his work, either in style or subject, could have come from his pen. Of the whole series ascribed to him, comparatively few bear any intrinsic marks of his hand.

² *A Letter to a Member of Parliament in Ireland on Choosing a new Speaker there.* Scott assigns a wrong date. Alan Brodrick resigned the Speakership, on being appointed Lord Chief Justice, in this year: and his successor was elected on May 19, 1710. Scott accepts the tract as written in 1708, at which time Swift's close connexion with the Castle would have prevented his writing what is a distinct attack upon the Lord-Lieutenant's policy.

mother's death.¹ There is no overstrained show of grief in the simple record of it in Swift's own words : but it tells us enough of the love he bore her, and of the weight of the blow that had now fallen. Henceforth, save for one, upon whom, as upon himself, he laid the burden of a mysterious and undefined bond, Swift stood alone. He never felt the want of companionship more than now, when drifting away from those with whom he had hitherto acted—fretting at the uncongenial solitude in which he was placed, and feeling the gradual inroads of disease.

During June and July, Swift was engaged in a correspondence with Tooke, his bookseller ; and it is at the close of a letter to Tooke that there occurs what is really the first indication on Swift's part of an inclination to change sides. As the facts have shown us, he had long been opposed on many points to the Whigs : but he had hesitated, partly from association, partly from dislike of the Tories, to break altogether with them. Now he has new plans of work : he will soon be over in England : "Since

¹ The memorandum in which it was recorded was copied by Mr. Nichols from one of Swift's memorandum books, that is now lost. "On Wednesday, between seven and eight in the evening, May 10, 1710, I received a letter in my chamber at Laracor (Mr. Percival and John Beaumont being by) from Mrs. Fenton, dated May 9, with one enclosed, sent from Mrs. Worrall at Leicester to Mrs. Fenton, giving an account, that my dear mother, Mrs. Abigail Swift, died that morning, Monday, April 24, 1710, about ten o'clock, after a long sickness, being ill all winter, and lame, and extremely ill a month or six weeks before her death. I have now lost my barrier between me and death : God grant I may live to be as well prepared for it, as I confidently believe her to have been ! If the way to Heaven be through piety, truth, justice, and charity, she is there."

it is likely," he says, "to be a new world, and since I have the merit of suffering by not complying with the old." This is the first clear evidence of a personal motive coming in to confirm Swift in opinions to which he had already been, for some time, inclined. But it is important to notice that this personal motive did not precede, but followed, his change of view.

For a while longer he lingers in association with Addison at Dublin and Finglas. Addison left finally, in August, 1710: and Swift wrote after him from Dublin, in terms that proved no open breach to have as yet taken place, fully as Swift recognized the changes that were now imminent in the Ministry. Whatever Government may come or go, he says, Addison is at least sure of the veneration of Ireland. "In short," says Swift,¹ "if you will come over again when you are at leisure, we will raise an army, and make you King of Ireland." Lord Wharton soon followed his secretary: and then, on the 31st of August,² Swift set out. He crossed the Channel that night: travelled from Holyhead in the train of Lord Mountjoy; and on the 7th of September he reached London, to judge for himself of the "new world" whose formation he had foreseen.

Changes had already been rapidly proceeding. Godolphin and his colleagues saw Mrs. Masham's³ influence now supreme over the Queen. Harley, who

¹ *Swift to Addison*, August 22, 1710.

² The dates are taken from the usual memorandum books.

³ Abigail Hill had now become Mrs. Masham by her marriage with Mr. Masham, who had been groom of the chamber to Prince George of Denmark.

had been foiled before, was now in league with her ; and the confederacy boded no good. The first decided blow was struck in the removal of Sunderland, in June, 1710.

The Whigs found their power slipping from their hands. They could not appeal to the country, because the country was thoroughly roused against them. Amongst the monied men in the city lay their chief support : in the allies of England abroad they might find assistance against the Tories. The alarm of the monied men and of the allies was, therefore, sedulously fostered. To the former it was represented, that Godolphin's withdrawal from office would occasion a collapse of credit : to the latter, it was urged that the fall of the Whigs meant the abandonment of the war, and the desertion of her allies by England. In their panic, the Whig Ministers turned to strange helpmates. Sir Gilbert Heathcote, and other worthy city magnates, were sent to remonstrate with the Queen. The Emperor and the Dutch instructed their envoys to state their views on the domestic politics of England. Anne might fairly consider that this was only a confession of their selfishness and weakness, and that to dictation so ill-timed and so unconstitutional she need pay little heed. Both to the city magnates, anxious about their stock, and to the allies, anxious lest English troops should be withdrawn from fighting for their interests, evasive replies were returned.

In August, just on the eve of Swift's arrival, still more decided steps were taken. Parliament was to

be dissolved and the verdict of the country asked : and meanwhile, Godolphin was desired to break his staff. Harley was brought into the Privy Council, and was named Chancellor of the Exchequer. The change was already wrought.

CHAPTER VIII

SWIFT AND THE NEW MINISTRY

September, 1710—May, 1711

ÆTAT. 43

Swift's advent in the "new world"—His own records of his conduct—His mission for the Irish Church—Breach with the Whigs deferred—The last of his *Tatlers*—*Description of a City Shower*—Overtures from the Tories—Two Invitations for one day—Meeting with Harley—Takes service with the new Ministry—The Election—*Sid Hamet's Rod*—Swift's mission for the Irish Church more hopeful—Coldness of Whig friends—Addison and Steele—The *Examiner*—Weak points in the ministerial position—Marlborough—The monied class—The October Club—Swift's defence of the Ministry—Appeal to the people—Attacks on Marlborough and Wharton—Piecemeal toleration—Defence of the landed aristocracy against the monied class—Influence of the *Examiner*—Opening of Parliament and Convocation—A white-letter day for Tory and High Churchman—Position of the Ministry—The inner cabinet and Swift—His new circle of friends—Stumbling-blocks in the way—The attempt of Giscard, and its results—A new lease of power for Harley.

WITH Swift's advent on the "new world" which the changes of the last few months had brought about, a new scene in his life opens. We must now bring to the test the charges against him of selfish and dishonest inconsistency.

There is at least no excuse for misrepresentation. From the moment of his landing in England down to his quitting it, in June, 1713, we have in the so-called *Journal* a record of unexampled minuteness and fidelity, in which Swift poured out, for the behoof of Esther Johnson, every passing idea suggested by the scenes in which he took part, and the men with whom he associated. He tells us in that *Journal* more than mere opinions: he gives us a picture of the whims and fancies, and prejudices, that lie at the root of opinion, and show far more of a man's character than we can learn from any formal expression of his political creed. In the confidences meant only for an eye that would interpret them with leniency, and to whom his very caprices would have a special meaning, we can read the character of the man, and can see not only that he was honestly attached to the new Ministry, but that he could not honestly have continued his allegiance to the Whigs.

He came over, at first, with very little idea either of the new position he was to take up, or of the part he was to play. He had thrown out, as we have seen, a casual expression of the hope that, failing other help, the new powers might give him some countenance. But he did not yet despair of accomplishing his mission on behalf of the Irish Church through his Whig friends.¹ He had been bitterly irritated by his

¹ So little truth is there in the notion that Swift came over "burning for revenge on the Whigs." Yet even Scott, favourable as he is willing to be to Swift, makes himself responsible for this idea, by allowing it to appear in the prefatory note to the *Examiner*,

previous failure, in the spring of 1709 : but now he came, with a definite commission from the Irish Bench, that joined him with the Bishops of Ossory and Killaloe, as representative of the Irish Church. The whole amount of the remission asked for from all the sources, amounted to no more than £3000 a year : but, small as it was, it meant something to a Church whose fabrics were fast disappearing by the devastations of time and of civil war ; where glebe houses were an exception, and where half a dozen livings had to be grouped together, to produce a pittance for the incumbent or a congregation for the church. It was now feared that any hopes of the grant were likely to be extinguished by the ill-will that Wharton felt for the thwarting of his test-abolition policy by Parliament and Convocation. The two bishops had hitherto been pressing the cause, but with so little zeal that, on Swift's arrival in London, he found they had already left.

To this task he now set himself, with little hope of success and with little liking for the instruments with which he had to work. "He never went to England," so he wrote to Stella, "with so little desire in his life." Let his commission succeed or not, he would stay only to finish it. The Whigs received him with open arms. "The Whigs were ravished to

(iii. 259). Neither this note, indeed, nor many others in the edition, can be fairly ascribed to Scott himself : and it is one of the great defects of his edition that the volumes are annotated by various hands, and often on inconsistent principles. It is necessary to point out, however, how completely the remark misrepresents Swift's relation to the Whigs when he came over at this time.

see me," he writes,¹ "and would lay hold on me as a twig while they are drowning." At first there is no sign that the breach between himself and them is irreparable. His letters are addressed to the care of Steele, who, though an ardent Whig, had not yet lost his Government appointment. His associates in the early weeks were all prominent Whigs—Addison, Steele, Garth,² Congreve, and Halifax. He continues for a time even to write for the *Tatler*,³ in which he had helped Steele in the previous year. He began again by a paper⁴ on the false taste that was corrupting style, anticipating, as it were, the strange proposal⁵

¹ Sept. 9, 1710.

² Dr. (afterwards Sir Samuel) Garth, the author of the *Dispensary*, one of those against whom we shall afterwards find Swift bringing a charge of encouraging a riot on Queen Elizabeth's birthday. See Chap. IX.

³ About Swift's earlier contributions to the *Tatler* some doubt exists. Drake (*Essays on Tatler and Spectator*, vol. iii.) assigns almost the same pieces to Swift as are admitted by Scott, save that the latter prints as Swift's, in addition, a part of No. 74, referring to the Table of Fame, which bears many marks of Swift's style, and No. 81, which is almost certainly not his. The other pieces assigned to him, both by Scott and by Drake, are: in No. 9, the verses on a Morning in Town; No. 32, On Madonella, a female *précieuse*, almost certainly *not* by Swift: along with a letter from Tobiah Greenhat, in No. 63, on a College for Damsels, which is also unlikely to be his: No. 35, a short letter on the Family of Ix, which is probably by Dartigueuave: No. 59, a short letter from Obadiah Greenhat, ridiculing an Irish bull which Steele had made, which bears signs of Swift's style: a part of No. 66, on Preaching, with a reference to Atterbury, almost certainly written by Swift: parts of Nos. 67 and 68, on the Chamber of Fame, which have all the marks of Swift; No. 70, a short letter from Jonathan Rosehat, on the faults of clerical oratory, also bearing signs of Swift's work: No. 71, on Clerical Neglect, which appears more like the work of Steele than Swift: No. 230, referred to in the text: the verses in No. 238; and a letter in No. 258, on the use of the phrase "Great Britain," which is signed with the initials, J. S., M. P., N. R., for Swift, Prior, and Rowe.

⁴ No. 230.

⁵ See Chap. X.

which he soon after made to Harley for an English Academy. At present all he has to urge is the vulgarity of the colloquialisms that were creeping in, and the affectation of the modish abbreviations that docked words of a syllable or two. What he wants to restore is described in a characteristic sentence, as "that simplicity which is the best and truest ornament of most things in human life." He followed it up by one or two short poems, amongst which the most notable is the *Description of the City Shower*, which, in some sixty lines of mock heroic poetry, gives us a picture, complete in all its graphic details, of the streets of town when their passengers were overtaken by the rain. Dulman sauntering to the coffee-house: the poet, grieving for the sufferings of his thread-bare coat: the "dagged females" rushing to the shop for shelter, only to

"Pretend to cheapen goods, but nothing buy:"

the tucked-up sempstress, trudging through the mud:
the beau boxed up in his chair: the spruce Templar,
who waits in patience, all the while he affects to call
a coach: the shed where, pursued by the elements,

"Triumphant Tories, and despondent Whigs
Forget their feuds, and join to save their wigs."

It is not surprising that Swift was pleased with the parody, and showed something of the author's irritation at the scant appreciation by his Irish friends.¹

¹ See Scott, xiv. 99. He tells us that the smells in his lodgings helped him to a part of the description.—*Journal*, Nov. 8, 1710.

Lord Somers, too, receives him cordially, and recalls to him that recommendation to Lord Wharton, the recollection of which was not likely to be palatable to Swift. Lord Halifax renews his professions of friendship: asks Swift to dinner, and courts him with that flattering attention of which he was so complete a master. But Swift's position was becoming every day more clear in its estrangement from the Whigs.

At first he scarcely understood the full extent of the change in popular feeling. In the earlier letters, he speaks of it almost as a joke. Day by day, its completeness becomes more evident. It makes him doubt and hesitate. The Whigs irritate and annoy him, but he scarcely feels that he can find a place amongst the Tories. Steele, he says, will lose his place as *Gazetteer*, "all the world detesting his engaging in parties."¹ The Whigs are "declining courtiers":² a "cunning, provoked, discarded party":³ Swift is ready to regret his connexion with them, but he as yet sees nothing for it, but to remain an "indifferent spectator" of the struggle. "The Tories tell me,"⁴ he says, "that I can make my fortune if I please: but I do not understand them, or rather, I *do* understand them."

The changes went on apace. Cowper, the Lord Chancellor, made way for Sir Simon Harcourt: Somers ceased to be Lord President, and Lord Rochester took his place: even Boyle, the Secretary of State, was involved in the fall of the Whigs, as one of the

¹ *Journal*, Sept. 10.

³ *Ibid.* Sept. 20.

² *Ibid.* Sept. 18.

⁴ *Ibid.* Sept. 30.

managers against Sacheverell. Brydges,¹ whose professed friendship Swift received coldly, retained his post of Paymaster, only by patching up a hasty alliance with the Tories. On the 21st of September, Parliament was dissolved; and just as the country was plunged into the excitement of an election, new Tory adherents were brought into the Ministry. Resignation followed resignation: "each," says Swift, "as sincere as a miser's death-bed repentance." The Duke of Buckinghamshire became Lord Steward. Henry St. John, who had left office with Harley in 1708, now came back as principal Secretary of State. Swift's old friend Lord Berkeley, now lying on his death-bed, was named Lord-Lieutenant of Gloucestershire: and George Granville, hereafter to be one of the "Brethren" of the Club, and to attain fame as friend of Swift and Pope, became Secretary at War, supplanting Walpole. The Duke of Hamilton was made Lord-Lieutenant of the County Palatine: and finally, on the 18th of October, the Duke of Ormond succeeded Wharton as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

In all these changes, Swift might find satisfaction, but it did not appear how he was to find his profit. But the turning-point soon came. We have it in his own words.² "After I had put out my candle last night, my landlady came into my room, with a servant of Lord Halifax, to desire I would go dine with him at his house near Hampton Court: but I sent

¹ Afterwards Duke of Chandos: the Timon of Pope's *Satire*.

² *Journal*, Oct. 4, 1710.

him word I had business of great importance that hindered me, etc. And, to-day, I was brought privately to Mr. Harley, who received me with the greatest respect and kindness imaginable; he has appointed me an hour on Saturday at four, afternoon, when I will open my business to him."

The change involved no surrender of principle. Already he had discarded the Whigs: he had laughed at their discomfiture, and had watched with contempt their awkward efforts to secure his favour. Already he had told Halifax that he "was the only Whig he loved"—which was a civil way of saying that he loved no Whigs. He had already blamed Steele for the officious zeal with which he had rushed into the party struggle. So far he had only disliked the Whigs: he now became the ally of the Tories. Opinion, principle, inclination, and resentment at personal neglect all combined to bring him over to that camp, where his sympathies had long lain, and the gates of which had been so readily thrown open at his approach.

Already he had in his pocket his lampoon on Godolphin.¹ The few lines describing the fate of *Sid Hamet's Rod* had a success, which, comparing them with Swift's other efforts, may to us seem somewhat strange. "It is cried up to the skies," says Swift:² and he recurs to it over and over again, with the curious pertinacity that he often shows as to pieces which we would scarcely regard as adding to his fame.

¹ *Sid Hamet's Rod*. See *Journal* for Oct. 4.

² *Journal*, Oct. 14.

The lampoon became the first war-note in his struggle with the Whigs.

His application for the First-Fruits now took a new and hopeful aspect; Harley promised to lay it before the Queen: and the only doubt now was as to the date when it would take effect, and the manner in which it should be announced. Esther Johnson had feared that the changes in high places might thwart his efforts; but it is far otherwise. "Revolutions a hindrance to me in my business!" he says,¹ "Revolutions?—to me in my business? If it were not for the revolutions, I could do nothing at all: and now I have all hopes possible."

He is settling down now in his new condition. His talk of an immediate return to Ireland is less definite. He had new interests and new friends in London;² nor were these as yet of one party only. A young Whig poet, named Harrison, a sprightly student fresh from Oxford, had attracted his friendship, and he was determined to make the poet's fortune. Steele and Addison are still much with him. Congreve, an old man before his time, still greeted him as the most delightful of companions.³ On the other hand, Matthew Prior, the steady adherent of the Tories, and now anticipating Swift in the *Examiner*: Nicholas Rowe, whom interest was leading over to the

¹ *Journal*, Oct. 14.

² Morphew at this time published the volume of *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*. London, 1711. It did not contain the *Tale of a Tub*, or the *Battle of the Books*.

³ Congreve was now blind with a cataract: and though, as Swift says, "never rid of the gout, yet looks young and fresh, and as cheerful as ever."—*Journal*, Oct. 26.

same side: Freind and Arbuthnot, the literary physicians of that party,—were all coming under his influence, and learning the charm that acted so strongly in spite of the pride and restlessness that made him dreaded by those who knew him only on the outside. But presently there arose vexations and irritations. Some of his former friends had reproached him for “his greatness amongst the Tories”; but “he valued them not.”¹ When the same reproaches came from Addison and Steele, Swift felt them more. Steele had got into trouble by his rash interference in the party struggle. Swift attempted to stay the penalty: but he did so with the result that might have been expected from one so vain and petulant as Steele. The matter was talked over with Addison: but Swift “found party had so possessed him, that he talked as if he suspected me, and would not fall in with anything I said.” Swift goes on:—

“So I stopped short in my overture, and we parted very dryly; and I shall say nothing to Steele, and let them do as they will: but if things stand as they are, he will certainly lose it (his post), unless I save him: and therefore I will not speak to him, that I may not report to his disadvantage. Is not this vexatious? And is there so much in the proverb of proffered service? When shall I grow wise? I endeavour to act in the most exact points of honour and conscience, and my nearest friends will not understand it so. What must a man expect from his enemies? This would vex me, but it shall not; and so I bid you good-night.”²

Amidst these suspicions of his friends, and under the burden of ill-health, Swift entered with no light

¹ *Journal*, Oct. 20.

² *Ibid.* Oct. 22.

heart upon the task of defending the Ministry. The difficulties to be met were enormous. The first was the opposition of Marlborough; another, almost as threatening, was the opposition of the monied class. Rumours were industriously spread that the new Ministry would usher in the rule of the Pretender by applying a sponge to the National debts.¹ But Harley found that exaggerated support was as dangerous as opposition. The wilder Tories refused to listen to reason. Banded together in the October Club, they strove to press the Ministry into extremes. If their advice had been followed, to use St John's own words, the Ministry would have been blown up in four and twenty hours. Nothing was more necessary than to soothe the wild impulses of these undisciplined supporters, without losing their support.

The Ministry were now about to meet Parliament.² They were safe in a large majority, if that majority could be kept within bounds. Harley, if he had few other talents, had at least learned by experience something of the art of leading a parliamentary majority. But beyond this, a wider verdict had to be secured, a wider support to be conciliated: and this was a part only of the task now entrusted to Swift.

¹ The avowed opposition of the ministerial supporters to the monied men, gave some colour to these insinuations of repudiation. But there is no evidence whatever that any such scheme was dreamt of: and the best argument against Swift's having any notion of such a scheme being on foot is, that he did a little stockjobbing himself, by investing £300 in the funds, when they were low, in the sure confidence that the fall was only temporary.—See *Journal* for Oct. 13, 1710.

² It opened on the 25th of November.

He began to write in the *Examiner* on the 2nd of November, 1710, and continued it till June in the next year. No literary defence of an administration was ever more admirably devised. Swift was then at the height of his power: all his energies were roused to the task, and he brought to it every stimulus that personal irritation could suggest. To say that he distanced all his competitors is only half the truth. He took a totally different range. The mass of these strove to gain attention by a jerky, half-colloquial style, by what was known as "banter," of a rough and ready sort, and by a clumsy twisting of an opponent's arguments, which was supposed to be attractive to the crowd of readers.¹ Nothing could be in stronger contrast with the strength and range of the sarcasm of Swift.

Whatever were Swift's feelings to Whigs or Tories when he left Ireland in August, there can be no question as to his genuine anger now. Each week had shown him more completely, the deceptions which the Whigs practised to upset their opponents, the personal bitterness which they brought into the struggle, and the evident affectation of the alarm which they professed to feel. The first words of his first *Examiner* ridicule the pretensions of the man who makes himself a partizan, when so placed as to have no real interest in partizanship. His contempt had been roused by the affected fears around him.

¹ In No. XXII. of the *Examiner*, Swift has given a parody of the efforts of his answerers, the most effective point in which is its truth to the originals which it is intended to hold up to ridicule.

"Several of my acquaintance among the declining party," he says, "are grown so insufferably peevish and splenetic, profess such violent apprehensions for the public, and represent the state of things in such formidable ideas, that I find myself disposed to share in their afflictions although I know them to be groundless and imaginary, or, *which is worse*, purely affected. To offer them comfort one by one, would be not only an endless, but a disobliging task. Some of them, I am convinced, would be less melancholy, if there were more occasion."

Subterfuges and tricks like these, he sets himself with all his heart to strip off. He claims¹ to write as "an impartial hand": and to explain away rather than to oppose the delusions which the discarded party would spread over the nation. To begin with, he is unwilling to admit the clear distinction between the parties, which Godolphin and his adherents would fain make out. "Let any one," he says,² "examine a reasonable honest man of either side, upon those opinions in religion and government which both parties daily buffet each other about, he shall find hardly one material point in difference between them." The bitterest opponents of the Ministry are not those who differ with their principles, but those who envy their power. "The bulk of the Whigs," he says,³ some months afterwards, "appears rather to be linked to a certain set of persons, than any certain set of principles: so that, if I were to define a member of that party, I should say, he was one who believed in

¹ *Examiner*, No. XV.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* No. XLIII.

the late Ministry." And as their vaunted principles sink, on examination, into the merest envy, so their numbers, in spite of their claim to represent the nation, dwindle into a handful. He is never tired of ridiculing the pretension which spoke of the Ministry as a faction—a faction, forsooth, which is supported by Queen and Parliament, by the clergy, and at least nine-tenths of the nation.¹ Such flimsy pretences he brushes aside: and beyond the handful of malcontents, he appeals boldly to the nation, by the same instinct which guided him in his later Irish struggle. He seems indeed to have suggested this course to Bolingbroke as the keynote of the political ideal with which Bolingbroke endeavoured to link his own name.² He lays hold of "this mighty change in the dispositions of the people," which the discontented Whigs would fain describe "as only a short madness in the vulgar."³ "Will they stand to this appeal," he says again, "and be determined by the *vox populi*, to which side their title of faction belongs?"⁴

Having thus reduced his opponents to the level of a discarded faction, and no national party, Swift pursues two distinct methods in dealing with them. In the first he attacks the views they represent: in the second, the personal character of their leaders. Members of the recent Ministry are attacked under the thin disguises of names from ancient history: but the brunt of his satire is reserved for his special

¹ Some three or four times in the course of these papers, Swift claims the same proportion (nine-tenths) of the nation, as supporters of the Ministry.

² See Chap. XV. ³ *Examiner*, No. XIV. ⁴ *Ibid.* No. XXXI.

enemy, Lord Wharton, and for the man whose name chiefly threatened danger to the Ministry, the Duke of Marlborough. In the character of Verres, Wharton and his misdeeds in the Government of Ireland are held up to scorn. No pains are spared to press home each charge against him, to cover him not only with hatred, but contempt.¹ With Marlborough a very different method is pursued. Swift knew how false, as a piece of tactics, it would have been to rouse sympathy for Marlborough by unmeasured invective, and he repeatedly declares in the *Journal* that his efforts have been given to temper the attacks on Marlborough. When he has to deal with him he invariably chooses one method. He paints in strong colours the vices of ambition and avarice. He shows what circumstances may heighten our dislike of them, what means of gratifying them are most odious. He lingers over the stains that they leave upon a name that might otherwise be glorious. And thus, without making any too visible attack upon Marlborough personally, he leaves the picture he has drawn to find its counterpart in the Duke, and makes the reader, and not himself, responsible for the identification.

But beyond personal invective, Swift is never weary of attacking the fallacies on which he now believed the Whig party to rest. He shows how flagrantly inconsistent their religious toleration is,

¹ The pamphlet on the character of Lord Wharton, in which Swift indulged his hatred more freely still, came out early in December.

with that political intolerance which bans all those who do not subscribe to the narrow articles of their shifting political creed. "They impose a hundred tests; they narrow their terms of communion: they pronounce nine parts in ten of the kingdom heretics, and shut them out of the pale of their Church. These very men, who talk so much of a comprehension in religion among us, how come they to allow so little of it in politics, which is their sole religion?"¹ He shows how consistently they have poured contempt upon the Church; and how ready they are to break down the walls that defend her against scepticism and dissent. He shows how they have attacked the clergy by charges inconsistent with one another, have at once "despised them for their poverty, and hated them for their riches: reproached them with avarice, and taxed them with luxury: accused them of promoting arbitrary power, and of attacking the prerogative."²

But the main burden of his complaint is one which weighed deeply with Swift, which through him influenced a whole school of thought, and which became the chief basis of the later Tory party. "For twenty years," he says, "the nation has groaned under the intolerable burden of those who sucked her blood for gain. We have carried on wars, that we might fill the pockets of stock-jobbers. We have revised our Constitution, and by a great and united national effort, have secured our Protestant succession, only that we may become the tools of a

¹ *Examiner*, No. XIX.

² *Ibid.* No. XXI.

faction, who arrogate to themselves the whole merit of what was a national act. We are governed by upstarts, who are unsettling the landmarks of our social system, and are displacing the influence of our landed gentry by that of a class of men who find their profit in our woes. If the late discarded Ministry represented anything, they represented this: and the change that has now come, will awaken the nation to a sense of its mistakes, will recover the rightful influence of the landed gentry, and will rid us of the pestilential swarm of stock-jobbers who are confederate with the Whigs." This is not the place to weigh or criticize these views: it is enough to point out that the note Swift strikes here, is one which passed on through the satires of Pope, and the pages of Bolingbroke, as a distinctive mark of the Toryism which they professed.

Throughout the whole series of the Essays, Swift takes up this theme repeatedly. "These men come," he says, "with the spirit of shopkeepers, to frame rules for the administration of kingdoms: as if they thought the whole art of government consisted in the importation of nutmegs, and the curing of herrings."¹ "But, God be thanked," he goes on, "they and their schemes are vanished, and their places shall know them no more." The Act which was passed in the first session of the new Parliament, requiring the possession of a certain amount of landed property as a qualification for membership of Parliament, he praises as "that noble bill of qualification," which is

¹ *Examiner*, No. XXI.

to secure "that future Parliaments be composed of landed men, and our properties be no more at the mercy of those who have none themselves, or at least only what is transient or imaginary."¹ In the same spirit, he inveighed against the contempt for birth and nobility, as "of all the heresies in politics profusely scattered by the partizans of the late Administration,"² that which is the most displeasing and most dangerous.

Such were the lines on which Swift conducted, during these months, the successful defence of the Ministry. As the series of Essays draws near its close, we see the tone of triumph more apparent, while he accepts, with some contempt, the tribute of acquiescence with which the Whigs had replaced their endless prognostications of evil. As spring comes on we shall find new causes contributing to the Tory success; but all through the winter the fight was hard enough.

The *Examiner* soon became notorious. Fifty times a day, Swift tells us,³ he heard the *Examiner* railed at and commended, and was forced to wear an indifferent countenance. His own importance grew with that of the Ministry, with whom, day by day, his own relations became more close.

When Parliament met, the triumphant alliance between the Ministry and the Church was curiously typified. William Bromley, the Tory member for Oxford University, was chosen Speaker: and on the same

¹ *Examiner*, No. XXIV.

² *Ibid.* No. XL.

³ *Ibid.* No. XVIII.

day Convocation elected as Prolocutor, Bromley's old college friend and the foremost champion of Convocation's rights—Dr. Francis Atterbury. Smalridge introduced the Prolocutor to the upper house in a Latin speech, which sounded a note of triumph for the High Church party. "The zeal of the people, the fervour of the aristocracy, the loving care of the Queen, the closest bonds of union between all ranks of citizens and the Church—all were in their favour. And now the old ties of sisterhood that were wont to bind together Parliament and Convocation, were renewed in the choice made by each that day, of a President for their debates."

Atterbury replied in a speech which carried the note of triumph even higher. He drew a bold picture of the Church as it ought to be. "As Englishmen, the clergy readily adhered to the view that Liberty and Authority went naturally together."¹ The Church was to be "*pulchra, suavis, et decora*," but none the less "*terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata*." Now was the time to realize their hopes. "Was there no *Queen* in Gilead, was there no physician there?" It was a new era: a new Constantine was to cover with the Royal purple the errors of the past, and the quarrels of factions.

Nothing could have been better than the auspices under which the new work began. If only Marlborough could be reduced: if the city magnates could be persuaded to trust their money to the new

¹ "In eam quidem, Angli cum sint, facile propendent sententiam, libertatem cum imperio pulchrè constare posse."

Ministry: if, in the ministerial ranks, no disunion were allowed to spread: and if, finally, the hot-headed Tory squires, who met at the Bell in King Street, Westminster, and called themselves the October Club, could be kept in check, all might go well. And for the present, thanks largely to Swift, all did go well, "narrow" as was "the isthmus on which the Ministry stood,"—bridging over the gulf between the discarded Whigs and more rabid Tories. The funds began to rise. Disaffection in the army was speedily checked by the cashiering of three officers of high rank who had drunk damnation to the Ministry. In January the Ministers were freed from the presence of the Duchess of Marlborough, whose ensigns of office were delivered up by her husband. He himself remained in the Queen's service: but he was obliged to exercise a studied caution: and, even at the head of his army, felt himself to be no longer the wielder of uncontrolled authority. His complete fall was only a matter of time.

Towards the close of January we find that a sort of Cabinet had been formed within the ranks of the Ministry. Harley, St. John, and Harcourt met for private consultation; they held the threads of the whole policy of the Government in their hands; and Swift was soon associated with them in these meetings, as one whose advice they must follow, and on whose help they must perforce rely. On the 17th of February we find him first admitted to the Saturday dinner, at which this select circle gathered.

From the date of that first meeting, which his *Journal* chronicles in October of the previous year, his intimacy both with Harley and St. John had grown apace. Harley's attention flattered him : and the easy and careless brilliance of St. John attracted him, even though it inspired him with a certain distrust, which he never entirely shook off. But, kindly as they both treated him, he occasionally found in their conduct cause of offence. He resented as an indignity the offer of £50 which Harley made to him, as a cheap payment for his services, and his anger was only with some difficulty appeased. When St. John, with the caprice of a spoilt favourite, affected to show him some coldness, Swift at once refused to submit to any such captiousness of mood : warning him that, if he had a complaint to make, he must state it, and not leave to his friend the trouble of guessing at the cause of his coldness : "it was what he would hardly bear from a crowned head, and he thought no subject's favour worth it."¹ Swift is determined to be an equal amongst equals or to have no part in their affairs. "If we let these great Ministers pretend too much," he says jocularly, "there will be no governing them."² He knew and had weighed beforehand the price that he would have to pay for such familiar intercourse. "They call me nothing but Jonathan : and I said, I believe they would leave me Jonathan, as they found me : and that I never knew a Ministry do anything for those whom they

¹ *Journal*, April 3, 1711.

² *Ibid.* Feb. 7, 1711 $\frac{1}{2}$.

make companions of their pleasures ; and I believe you will find it so ; but I care not.”¹

While Swift was thus the sworn associate of the Ministers, and giving them an assistance without which they could scarcely have maintained their hold on the country for a month, his own private life, at the same time, has points of interest which we must not overlook. It is true that he looked forward with longing to the time when the suspense and anxiety might be over, and he might rejoin Stella. Over and over again he tells her of his hope “that they may never be asunder again.” But, in spite of himself, there were influences arising that told ill for Stella’s future and his own. His fidelity was not less ; his satisfaction with his present position was not greater ; but the brightness of that present position, even with its drawbacks, stood in sharp contrast to the dreary monotony that awaited him at Laracor. Its bustle and variety did not come amiss to Swift, however dutifully he might long to be back in the quiet peacefulness of his life with Stella. He felt himself a power amongst men. He renewed old friendships and attracted new. Lord Peterborough showed his affection with his usual fantastic eccentricity, and the charm was not lost on Swift.² When Peterborough sets out this year for Spain, he and Swift arrange “to be mighty con-

¹ *Journal*, Feb. 17, 1711.

² It was largely through Swift’s agency that Peterborough was withdrawn from his former Whig friends, those “junta pigmies,” as he calls them.

stant correspondents.”¹ Matthew Prior, with his maxim of “*vive la bagatelle*,” came to be accepted with a toleration not quite natural to Swift. Young Harrison was started on a new *Tatler* in January, and obtained soon after, through Swift’s recommendation, the post of secretary to Lord Raby’s embassy. Amongst all sorts and conditions of men, Swift was now moving in free intercourse, from Dartineuf, the epieure, “the man who knows everything and whom everybody knows,”² to Dartineuf’s friend, the rising poet of the day, “Mr. Pope, a Papist.”

How long things might have gone on thus, either with the Ministry or with Swift, it is hard to say. The position of the Ministry was far from secure. It was needful to have some policy more definite than that of ridiculing the fallen Whigs, or recalling their mistakes. It was impossible, so long as the war went on, to be altogether independent of Marlborough, and Marlborough’s recovered influence would undoubtedly bring back the Whigs. Complications were certain to arise, and were threatening from more points than one. Finance was a stumbling-block: the city was still alienated from the Government. The “narrow isthmus” on which Swift saw that the Ministry stood, might soon break down. By degrees it was recognized that there was but one means whereby the Ministry and the country might be

¹ *Journal*, Jan. 3, 17 $\frac{11}{10}$. The *Journal* gives us a lively picture of Peterborough, on the eve of his departure, surrounded at an eating-house by a crowd of money-lenders and harpies of various sorts.

² *Journal*, March 22, 17 $\frac{11}{10}$.

saved : it was a means, however, which no one cared very loudly to proclaim. "We must have peace," says Swift,¹ "let it be a good or a bad one, though nobody dares talk of it." Nowhere in the *Examiner* had Swift ventured to press the proposal which he thus broaches in the *Journal*. On the contrary, he felt it to be necessary to maintain the Tories to be every whit as zealous in the prosecution of the war as their opponents. But the words of the *Journal* give us, unquestionably, the conviction which was pressing on him and on the Ministry. The chance was as yet, however, a desperate one. But only four days after the words were written, the whole aspect of affairs was changed.

The 8th of March was the anniversary of the Queen's accession, and was celebrated with the usual rejoicings. The House of Parliament attended divine service, and a Court was afterwards held. But the Queen did not appear. There were vague rumours of danger. She had been abroad the day before : but on the ground, as was alleged, of some trifling illness, she now kept her room. As Swift was walking in the Mall, about two o'clock, in the midst of the holiday crowd, one face struck him as he passed along : it was that of a French adventurer of noble family, whose career was well known about town. The Marquis de Guiscard, as he now called himself, had begun his career in the Catholic Church : but after a long course of scandal, intrigue, conspiracy, and falsehood, he had obtained a command in the English

¹ *Journal*, March 4, 1711.

army, and been enriched by pensions both from the States and from England. For some years this continued. But he accomplished nothing: he was despised by those associated with him: officers of any name and character refused to serve under him: he trafficked with the commissions in his regiment to a degree, even at that day, scandalous: he ran into debt: he shocked a not too strict society by the outrageous licence of his morals: he flaunted his notoriously ill-gotten gains in the face of London society, where he was distinguished for the splendour of his entertainments, for the magnificence of his equipage, for the number of his kept mistresses. Such a life was only too likely to bring him into contact with St. John: and a quarrel had arisen between them as to the paternity of a child of which neither cared to assume the responsibility.

The patience of the Ministry with this adventurer was already on the wane when Godolphin fell. Guiscard had proved too arrant a rogue and too hairbrained a desperado to suit their purpose, however eager they were to find instruments against France. His supplies were withdrawn. He borrowed and begged and starved. His equipage was dropped: his entertainments ceased. At this juncture it was that his former boon companion, St. John, came to be Secretary of State. By his help—from motives of kindness, or from fear of exposure, or both—Guiscard obtained the promise of a pension of £500 a year. But a Government that had come to power to reduce expenditure, could not afford to be lavish. Harley

was at the Treasury : he had no ties with Guiscard in his past life ; and by him the pension was cut down to £400, and provision for its regular payment was refused. Angry, disappointed, starving, the maddened wretch sought for some plan which would at once satisfy his craving for intrigue and his extravagance. He entered into correspondence with France, though with what motive it is hard to say. The Ministry were alarmed ; St. John issued a warrant for his arrest ; the Privy Councillors were summoned to the Cockpit ; and within an hour after Swift had met him and been struck by his “excited air,” he was in the hands of the Queen’s messenger. He had, we are told, hardly eaten a fair meal for four months. Consciousness of his guilt, or despair of regaining the revenues which he had before enjoyed, made him desperate : he begged the messenger to kill him. His boast in former days that the scaffold was only for the coward, and that he carried that with him which would deliver him from the executioner, was unfulfilled ; and in a half-frenzied state he was carried to Whitehall, where the Council had met. Guiscard was insolent under examination, and was at once evasive and confused. He sought a word in private with St. John, who refused the request. The fellow was now goaded to wild fury, and probably neither thinking nor caring what he did, he made two or three thrusts at Harley with a penknife, which he had picked up from a table in an adjoining room. A noisy scuffle followed. Every one started to his feet : and St. John, with an alertness that had not a

little of bravado in it, attacked the unarmed wretch with his sword. The others rushed between and broke St. John's sword: the would-be assassin was at length overpowered and seized by a brawny messenger: and Harley's wound was looked to. It was not dangerous, except for the ill-state of Harley's health, harassed at the time by anxieties which he had attempted to conceal, and injured by years of over-indulgence in drink.

But, for the time, his political fortune was made.¹ The news spread like wildfire over London. The attempt, on the face of it, was little else than the frenzied outburst of a desperado, maddened by drink and disappointment. There was every expectation that the man attacked would speedily be restored. But a universal feeling was excited by the act. Each citizen seemed to find the air full of the daggers of hired French assassins. The Ministry, as well as Harley, rose rapidly in popularity. The people would have lynched Guiscard had they caught him, and as it was they thronged to the Tower to insult his body when death freed him from the possibility of the scaffold.² Parliament passed one resolution

¹ An account of the attempt, which carefully brought out all the points most likely to rouse the nation's sympathy, was prepared by Mrs. Manley, the authoress of the *Memoirs of the New Atalantis*, under the eye and direction of Swift.

² In Guiscard's last hours, as we are told by Swift, one heart, and one heart only, in London, felt for him. "A poor wench," who probably owed him nothing but her ruin, sent him a bottle of sack. It was feared that it might contain poison, and the keeper refused to admit it. When the poor wretch died, his body was exposed to the crowd, and the wounds received from various ministerial hands were duly pointed out by the attendants.

after another, congratulating the Queen on the preservation of her Minister, and Harley on his miraculous escape. They devised a new law to meet such attempts in future, and might even have stained the statute book by an *ex post facto* penalty, had not Guiscard's death prevented such a signal folly.

The news reached Swift as he was lingering after dinner in Lady Catherine Morris's drawing-room. The company broke up in consternation, and Swift seemed to receive a double portion of the current alarm. For the time, he appears to us in a natural guise. The cynicism, the sarcasm, the half-captious comment, that succeed one another so quickly in the *Journal*, break down at once. We see him for the moment stirred to the very heart, and absolutely natural in his grief and his anxiety. The shortness of his acquaintance with Harley is forgotten. The memory of half-humorous estrangements, and of the resentment caused by the ill-timed offer of money, is gone at once. Swift only remembers his wounded patron as one who showed him kindness after others had misled, or neglected, or suspected, or dallied with, him : as one who had always treated him with "the tenderness of a parent." During these weeks Swift's hopes and thoughts centre about the sick-bed ; and on Harley's recovery, he becomes his closest confidant in wielding that added power, that now was his.

Swift condemns the show : but it was left for Anne herself, when she heard of it, to send summary orders to discontinue the indecency. Swift is so far affected by the feeling of the moment, that he cannot hide his regret that the childish barbarity of hanging the body in chains was prevented by a legal technicality.

CHAPTER IX

SWIFT, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PEACE

May-December, 1711

ÆTAT. 43-44

The personal bond between Swift and Harley—The Ministry and the task before them—The favour of the Church secured—Death of Rochester—Harley created Earl of Oxford and Lord Treasurer—Swift's estimate of Oxford and of St. John—His intercourse with the Ministry—Other sides of his life—New intimates—His lodgings at Chelsea—Atterbury and Swift—The Club and its aims—Swift at Windsor—Visitors from Ireland—New enemies—The Duchess of Somerset, and the *Windsor Prophecy*—Old friends and new—Arbutnot and Swift—A "bite" for the Maids of Honour—Life at Windsor—Sacheverell and his claims—Lord Peterborough and Swift—The Vanhomrighs—Mrs. Anne Long—Swift's carelessness as to his own interest—Proposals for a Peace—Fall of Bouchain—Dr. Hare's Sermon—The *Vindication of the Duke*—Negotiations on foot—Prior and his Mission—Swift's account of it—The Whigs and Nottingham—The Dissenters and their schemes—Swift's reply to their appeal—The *Hue and Cry after Dismal*—The *Conduct of the Allies*—Marlborough's return—A suspected plot—Parliamentary opposition—Prospects of failure—Swift's suspense—Marlborough's dismissal—Twelve new peers—The Ministry saved.

THE weeks that followed the attack on Harley drew more close the bond stimulated at first by pique on Swift's side, by policy on Harley's. It was with

this as with all Swift's relations to his fellow-men : every tie, be it in politics, or in literature, ripened with him into a personal friendship, just as every dispute grew, for him, into an irksome personal antipathy. Rough as was his coating of cynicism, it covered a sensitivity only too keen. As with others, so now with Harley, attachment blinded his judgment : and to that attachment he paid the tribute of an unchanging, even when an impolitic, devotion.

Harley needed, at this moment, all the help that Swift could give him. The personal popularity which Guiscard's attack had brought was in its nature evanescent. The ascendancy of the Tories required a sounder foundation if it were to last. The Whigs must be deprived of their monopoly of financial reputation. A specious scheme for converting the National debt into a terminable loan seemed to promise this result. The orthodox Churchmen must be attached to the Tory party by some solid bonds. Swift suggested a means of doing so, by a vote of three hundred and fifty thousand pounds to supply fifty churches for the new population between Westminster and Temple Bar, and between Charing Cross and Soho. These were but the beginnings : more definite lines of policy were laid before long.

Harley's moderate Toryism might still have been overshadowed by Toryism of another hue. The leader of this more rigid school was Lord Rochester ; but on the 3rd of May, Lord Rochester's death freed Harley from a powerful rival. It was followed before long by visible signs of Harley's increasing power.

On the 24th of May he became Earl of Oxford and Mortimer and Baron Wigmore. A week later the new Earl was advanced to the dignity of Lord Treasurer.

In Swift's own words, Harley had grown "by persecution, turning out, and stabbing." All helped to give him a hold on Swift's affection, and to win from Swift a respect which was strangely high. Harley had unquestionable skill in the lesser arts of statesmanship: some tact in parliamentary management: even a certain keenness of appreciation for national necessities. All these many of his contemporaries probably rated too low: but with an estimate much more certainly wrong, his apathy was mistaken by Swift for philosophy, his hesitation for calculating wisdom. "The Treasurer," says Swift, "is much the greatest Minister I ever knew: regular in life, with a true sense of religion, an excellent scholar, and a good divine; of a very mild and affable disposition, intrepid in his notions, and indefatigable in business, an utter despiser of money for himself, yet frugal, perhaps to an extremity, for the public."¹ Swift, like all the best amongst literary men, admired those whose power lay in practical, rather than in theoretic work, proving itself by tangible success in affecting men.

Side by side with Harley, stood another, whose meteor-like genius also attracted Swift. But the genius of St. John, finer as it was in grain and fibre, yet carried with it always, for Swift, something of

¹ *Swift to Archbishop King*, Aug. 26, 1711.

distrust. It is thus, for instance, that Swift speaks of the new Secretary when all the world was running after him.

“I think Mr. St. John the greatest young man I ever knew : wit, capacity, beauty, quickness of apprehension, good learning, and an excellent taste : the best orator in the House of Commons, admirable conversation, good nature, and good manners : generous, and a despiser of money. *His only fault is talking to his friends in way of complaint of too great a load of business, which looks a little like affectation ; and he endeavours too much to mix the fine gentleman and man of pleasure with the man of business. What truth and sincerity he may have I know not.*”¹

The coarse debauchery of St. John roused Swift's indignation and contempt ; the whims and caprices of the spoiled favourite of fortune moved his ridicule only. Friendly as they now were, intimate as they afterwards became, there was nothing in the bond between Swift and St. John that could compare with the tie that knit together Oxford and Swift.

That was not merely the tie of colleague to colleague. Bound by no official trammels, Swift could speak as no colleague could, and claimed exemption from all official technicalities. Rather than a confidant in business, he was a guide in policy : rather than a tactical adviser, an interpreter of the thoughts of men : ready also to translate into popular form the ideas embraced in his patron's schemes.

This involved close and constant work, and Swift paid for it the penalty of ill-health. Close and ill-ventilated lodgings, with the press of exciting business,

¹ *Journal*, Nov. 3, 1711.

brought back his old enemies, deafness and giddiness. To escape awhile he took lodgings at Chelsea, walking backwards and forwards between the village, where he slept, and Mrs. Vanhomrigh's house, where he left the gown and wig he wore in town. He describes in the *Journal* this walk, out through the Mall, with its evening crowd of promenaders, past Buckingham House, into the hay-fields beyond, and so to his lodgings, half a mile beyond Chelsea Church. There he lived close by Atterbury, now Dean of Carlisle, whose library, garden, and even larder were open to Swift, and whose chariot often carried him to town and saved the expense of a hackney-coach. In Atterbury's library they often lingered late on their return from town, and forgot for a while the wrangles of Convocation, and the excitement of the political struggle.

It was during Swift's stay at Chelsea that the Society or Club was formed, which typified much that keeps the memory of these four years green, and out of which the Scriblerus Club appears to have grown. Swift was the centre of the whole : and though it was started in his absence, the idea was communicated to him in June, and it was left to him to frame the rules. Its members were at first but twelve : and they were linked together by literary tastes, no less than by their hatred of the Whigs. It was, as its founders expressed it, "to help conversation and to aid desert by recommendations." Its members were to have one of two qualifications : they must be men who had interest, or men who had wit. The Lord Treasurer, the Duke of Ormond, St. John, and Lord

Arran : Bathurst, Lansdowne, and Masham : Swift, Arbuthnot, and Freind—typified the various elements of which it was composed. Whatever the difference of rank, membership created a brotherhood which superseded other titles. The members met every Thursday, at some one of the many eating-houses between St. James's Street and St. Martin's Lane, and the president for the evening entertained his brethren.

Leaving Chelsea in July, Swift came back for a short time to Suffolk Street, before the town broke up. Then he moved with the Court to Windsor, to be near the Lord Treasurer and Secretary. The stir and the movement, the bustle and the variety of the Court, as well as the beauty of the place, attracted him. Moving amongst the motley society that gathered there, he was gaining deeper knowledge of human nature—it may well be, also, a surer basis for his cynicism. But he found time for acts of kindness. Joe Beaumont from Trim ; Dr. Raymond, its vicar ; Archdeacon Walls, his trusty factotum in Dublin,—all had some kindness done them. Even Dilly Ashe, the brother of St. George Ashe, the Bishop of Clogher, received a kindly greeting, if not for his own, at least for his brother's sake, much as his lack of personal dignity tried Swift's patience. "The king of inconstancy," he is called by Swift, who prophesies that his bloated face "will hiss in the waters at the bath." "The rabble will say," writes Swift, "there goes a drunken parson, and, which is worse, they will say true."¹

¹ *Journal*, June 30, 1711.

Parnell, too, the young Irish poet, came over with an introduction from Bishop Ashe, hoping to secure some attention for his poetic gifts on the larger theatre of London. Slender as was the rill of his poetic fountain, it won a ready appreciation from Swift, who liked him for having broken with the Whigs, for the unpretending simplicity of his disposition, for the keenness of temperament that was soon tried by bereavement in the death of his wife. Parnell never rallied from the blow: and Swift's sympathy for the poet's distress perhaps increased the respect for his muse. "He passes all the poets of the day by a bar's length," says Swift. However others might judge of Parnell's weaknesses, they met with no severity of condemnation from Swift: and at the wreck that sorrow had begun Swift at least refused to gibe.

To help his friends was, as Swift himself said, "too much of a pleasure to him to be a virtue." But small kindnesses did not form the only varieties in his busy life. It had also a harder side. His was not a temperament to hang back from a new foe: and he had soon many on his hands. Foremost of all stood the Duchess of Somerset, whom he attacked at the close of this year in a poem called the *Windsor Prophecy*. The poem was printed and ready for publication when Swift stopped it at the earnest solicitation of Mrs. Masham, but not before it had been handed about and become currently known. It placed the coping stone on an enmity which had been growing for some time, and which now closed

the door of Court favour on Swift. In its bitterness of invective it outruns the usual fierceness even of Swift's pen : and the lady had a character and a history that made its strokes come home with deadly force.¹

The loss of old friends tried him more hardly, however, than the burden of new enmities. He had striven to keep Steele's post of Gazetteer for him, till his patience was broken by Steele's ungrateful vanity. He had sought a place for poor "Pastoral Philips," who was so prudently nursing his favour with the Whigs, as to disgust the Tories. He still clung to Addison : "No man," he says, "is half so agreeable as he," but he was stung to the quick when he found Addison not great enough to overlook party politics, and ready to assume a coolness in response to Swift's

¹ Elizabeth, Baroness Percy, was daughter and heiress of Josceline, Earl of Northumberland, who died in 1670. When in her fourteenth year, she was married, in 1679, to Henry Cavendish, Earl of Ogle, the only son of the Duke of Newcastle. He died in 1680, and in 1681 she was married to Thomas Thynne of Longleat, a man of great wealth, who was friend to Monmouth, and has obtained a place in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* as Issachar. The lady, then little more than a child, fled from her husband to Holland. In February, 1682, Thynne was assassinated in the Haymarket by foreigners, supposed to be instigated by Count Königsmark, who had paid his addresses to Lady Ogle before her second marriage, and who appeared in London ten days before the murder. Although he was acquitted on trial, the evidence against Königsmark was strong. It may be that the lady gave Königsmark false hopes : at any rate, he did not become her husband : but three months later, the girl of sixteen, whose experiences had already been sufficiently exciting, married Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, and became at a later day, as the confidante of Anne, an organ of political intrigue. Her red locks, that seemed so emblematic of her temper, were a favourite topic of satiric reference ; but Swift does not hesitate to ascribe to her the more serious attribute of flagrant guilt.

ready friendliness. For Congreve, Whig in sympathy, Swift secured the placability of Harley: "I have made a worthy man easy," he says, when he has finished the benefit, "and that is a good day's work."

But his life was too busy, the places of the old too quickly filled up by new friends, to allow him time to repine. At the table of Green Cloth he met the courtiers who could tell of the scandals that were rife when Charles II. was king; discussed schemes with the cautious and long-headed Under-Secretary, Erasmus Lewis; or mingled politics, art and literature, in his converse with the Court Physician, Arbuthnot, whom a sympathy at once of opinion, of humour, and of temperament, knit close to Swift. They pretended to have on hand a *History of the Maids of Honour*, which had no existence save in the imagination of Arbuthnot and Swift, but which served well enough as "a bite" to the ladies of the Court. By a curious chance they found themselves pressing for the same appointment. Arbuthnot claimed a vacant captaincy for his brother: Swift had asked it for a friend. Arbuthnot waived the point: "He would not," says Swift, "wrong a friend of mine." Even thus early, Swift marked in simple words his opinion of Arbuthnot, as "a perfectly honest man." It was a eulogy Swift bestowed on few.

For Stella's behoof, he gives in the *Journal* some graphic pictures of the life at Windsor. He tells of the hunts in Windsor Park, which the Queen followed "in a chaise with one horse, which she

drives herself, and drives furiously, like Jehu, and is a mighty hunter, like Nimrod." Elsewhere he gives a picture of an autumn day's employment at the Court. They formed "a noble caravan" for an outing in the Park. The Duchess of Shrewsbury was there in her one-horse chaise, with a troop of ladies of honour. The Duke, Mrs. Masham's husband, and two or three others, with Arbuthnot and Swift, were on horseback. This and that mishap turned up, till they were as hard put to it, as in the rides about Trim that Stella knows so well: and Swift himself "in his coat of light camlet, faced with red velvet, and silver buttons," had much talk with the Duchess. The story of Swift's life is dark enough to make these glimpses of tinsel not unwelcome.

But Swift's position as he was helping to build up the ministerial policy, threw him perforce into contact with others, with whom he cared less to deal. The Ministers had amongst their supporters some whose claims it was not very convenient to recognize. The noisy divine whom Godolphin's fatal error had, a year before, made the hero of the hour, now claimed his reward. If it was useless to ignore the debt, it was still troublesome to recognize it. Swift, more than the Ministers, felt the obligation, much as he disliked the man, and little sympathy as he had with the extreme opinions of which Sacheverell had been the noisy exponent. The Ministry, indeed, "hate Sacheverell, as mortally as Sacheverell hates them": but Swift forces an avowal of the debt: and it is paid for the present by a post given to Sacheverell's brother. But

"he shall be none of my acquaintance," says Swift, as he strikes off the score which Sacheverell had managed to run up against his patrons.

Amongst the new circle in which Swift now moved, none was more remarkable than Lord Peterborough.¹ That brilliant genius, whose life repeats, in the prosaie days of Queen Anne, all that was fabled of the age of knight-errantry, was in London for a few weeks at midsummer, spending in uneasy leisure one of those intervals between the coruscating flashes of energy with which he was wont to astonish Europe. During his absence Swift had been his constant correspondent: and at home was his constant companion. Formerly a Whig, his eccentricities had first driven him outside of the charmed circle of the Whig clique. His former assoeiates had criticised severely his conduct of the war in Spain. His vanity wounded,

¹ It was about this time that Swift addressed to Lord Peterborough, whose previous title was Earl of Mordaunt, the well-known verses:

"Mordanto fills the trump of fame,
The Christian worlds his deeds proclaim,
And prints are crowded with his name.

"In journeys he outrides the post,
Sits up till midnight with his host,
Talks politics and gives the toast.

"Knows every prince on Europe's face,
Flies like a squib from place to place,
And travels not but runs a race.

"A skeleton in outward figure,
His meagre corpse, though full of vigour,
Would halt behind him, were it bigger.

"So wonderful his expedition,
When you have not the least suspicion,
He's with you like an apparition."

his achievements wasted, his honour questioned, he had turned violently against his accusers ; and Swift's influence had helped to bring him into the opposite camp. "He has abundance of good qualities," says Swift ; "we love each other mightily."

As the nights drew in, Swift's visits to Windsor ceased : and the more critical aspect of affairs required his constant attendance in town. From Suffolk Street he moved to St. Martin's Street in Leicester Fields : and thence, a month later, to Panton Street in the Haymarket. In Suffolk Street, he is bored by the presence, in the same lodgings, of one Tisdall, of Dublin,¹ who has come over to London with his wealthy wife. In the opposite house, another Dublin acquaintance, Dick Tighe, was staying with his wife, and their connubial strife amused the neighbours. But Swift found town dull in these autumn months, and was glad to escape at times to the better company that greeted him in Lord Peterborough's gardens at Parson's Green.

Another stream, now joining the main current of his life, calls for some notice here. His acquaintance with the Vanhomrigh family was now of some standing. Their neighbourhood in Bury Street had led to an interchange of small civilities, and this had ripened into an intimacy, scarcely heeded by Swift, but to have dire effect on another's fate. One amongst his friends had an eye keen enough to see

¹ This was *not* Stella's former lover, Dr. Tisdall of Belfast, but a well-known citizen of Dublin, whose ambition, at a later day, to be M.P. for Trinity College, Dublin, was opposed by Swift.

probable danger. This was Mistress Anne Long, lately the reigning toast; now with broken health and fortune, pursued by bailiffs, and compelled to take refuge, under a borrowed name, at Lynn in Norfolk. In a letter from Norfolk she speaks of Miss Hessy Vanhomrigh, and shows a woman's keenness in detecting what others seemingly ignored. Swift had spoken of some attachment which Miss Hessy Vanhomrigh seemed to have formed for one Hatton: but Mistress Long ventures to doubt its truth. If so, she says, "She is not the girl I took her for: *but to me she seems melancholy.*" We can hardly doubt what that melancholy meant: as little can we doubt that Mistress Long had divined its meaning. Did she intend to convey a hint to Swift of what he did not notice, till too late?

Before we leave Mistress Long, there is a last scene in her life, not without interest for those who would understand the heart of Swift. In one of those little memorandum books which contain his accounts and jottings of his movements, there occurs the following note:—

"Dec. 22, 1711.—On Saturday at four in the morning, dyed Mrs. Anne Long, at Lynn in Norfolk, where she had retired about two years before, and lived under the name of Smyth. The news of it came on Monday night following, which was Christmas Eve: and I heard it on Christmas Day at noon, which was Tuesday. She was the most beautiful person of the age she lived in, of great honour and virtue, infinite sweetness and generosity of temper, and true good sense.

"J. SWIFT."

Even in the *Journal*, Stella had to hear Swift's

regrets. His Christmas Day, he says, is saddened by the news. "I was never more afflicted at any death. . . . In her last letter she told me she hoped to be easy by Christmas: and she kept her word, although she meant it otherwise." Her friends proving selfish, Swift himself wrote to Lynn, giving directions for her burial, and undertaking to erect to her a simple monument. If Swift's nature was unduly cynical, at least it needed no device but misfortune to melt that cynicism into pity.

Such was Swift's life, and such his surroundings during these months. One subject is noticeable only by its absence. He presses no claim for advancement on his own behalf. In a curious letter of September in this year, Archbishop King gives the well-meant but blundering advice, that Swift should leave his present pursuits, should take to religious writing, and should look to his advancement in life. He may write something, the Archbishop thinks, "both profitable and agreeable above most things that pass the press." "In Dr. Wilkins' *Gifts of Preaching*," the letter runs, "Swift may find a catalogue of useful subjects yet untouched." It is strange that a man, accustomed to associate with Swift, should not have seen the inaptness of this solemn trifling. Swift resents it: but he does so with singular dignity, and with little show of anger. As to his fortune, "I shall never be able," he says in his reply, "to make myself believed how indifferent I am about it." When his work was done, Swift might claim what was no favour, but his due. But now, he has put his shoulder

to the wheel, and though he grumbles at times, he has no thought of the reward. "I am half weary of them all," he says to Stella in October; "I often burst out into these thoughts, and will certainly steal away as soon as I decently can. I have many friends and many enemies: and the last are more constant in their nature. I have no shuddering at all to think of retiring to my old circumstances, *if you can be easy.*"

Swift returned to town on the 8th of October, to renew the active fight on his patrons' behalf. The weariness of the war had now deepened into disgust. The heavy taxes were ruining trade: bankruptcies were numerous: farms were tenantless: recruits were scarcely to be found. The nation was irritated by the feeling that it had been deceived. The allies showed undue anxiety at the prospect of peace. Foreign Ministers were amazingly interested in our domestic politics: the Whigs were amazingly intimate with foreign Ministers.

All alike pointed to the expediency of peace: and to this end Swift now gave his help. But meanwhile the political alliances of the Dissenters were, if possible, to be broken: the Church was to be strengthened: Presbyterianism to be curbed in Ireland: and Episcopacy encouraged in Scotland.

In England, an appointment made this autumn recognized almost forgotten claims on behalf of the Church. The office of Privy Seal was in August conferred upon Dr. Robinson, Bishop of Bristol and Dean of Windsor. The most sanguine might dream that the days of Wyckham and Waynflete were to

return. "All the friends of the present Ministry," says Swift, "are extreme glad, and the clergy above the rest. The Whigs will fret to death to see a civil employment given to a clergyman. It was a very handsome thing in my Lord Treasurer, and will bind the Church to him for ever."

In Ireland all seemed favourable to the views Swift had at heart. The reception of the Duke of Ormond, as Lord-Lieutenant in place of Wharton, had proved how popular were the Tories. At Ringsend, the gentry flocked in crowds to meet him: the Dublin mob greeted him with shouts for Church and Queen, which served no less as a reflection on his predecessor than as a compliment to himself. When Parliament met, Lords, Commons, and Convocation joined in loyal addresses. The most rigid of Tory Churchmen, the quondam defender of Sacheverell, Sir Constantine Phipps, was appointed Chancellor: and save for a remnant of Whiggism in the corporation of Dublin, the world of Ireland seemed transformed.

In Scotland, the Ministers found their supporters almost embarrassing in their zeal. Toryism, there, was only too likely to take the guise of Jacobitism. The Union was still looked back upon with bitter hatred. Presbyterianism was regarded by many of the country clergy with profound dislike. We are told by a good Presbyterian authority¹ that two-thirds of the people were still, at heart, adherents of the Episcopal form. Even amongst the Presbyterians themselves there was a strong leaven of those who

¹ Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk.

rejected the traditions of the Covenanters, and who anticipated the views of the Moderates, so powerful a generation afterwards. The prevailing current of opinion soon enabled the Ministry to take steps to gratify those with whom Swift sympathized.¹

Resting thus upon a considerable basis of popularity, and with the hopes of their adherents emboldened in each of the three kingdoms, the Ministry were ready to press forward the peace. Negotiations were already in train, when the long-expected fall of Bouchain took place. It was the signal for a renewal of the paper war. Was the long delayed success an argument for peace, or was it a reason for renewing our flagging efforts in the war? Dr. Hare, the Duke's chaplain, a busy and pragmatistical divine, began the contest. Preaching before the Duke, he urged the absolute sinfulness of not continuing the war, and the perverse neglect of Heaven's gifts which a peace involved. Swift and his "understrappers" straightway replied in a *Comment on the Sermon*, the work of the same not very worthy coadjutor who had written the pamphlet on Guiscard's attempt, poor Mrs. Manley of the *New Atalantis*. Swift disclaims all part in this and the tract which followed it, but there can be little doubt that the plan and the arguments were largely suggested by him. A pamphlet followed, fulsomely laudatory of the Duke's achievement in forcing the lines of Bouchain: and this was answered, nominally

¹ How much their action in favour of Episcopacy in Scotland, and in restoring the right of patronage in the Presbyterian Church, gratified Swift, may be seen in the Third Book of *The History of the Four last Years of the Queen*.

by Mrs. Manley, in *A Vindication of the Duke of Marlborough*. It affects to defend the Duke against pretended champions, whose complaints are said to be no better than libels on his character. They complained of his neglect, of his loss of power, of the nation's ingratitude: does not this, argues the *Vindication*, show a desire to convict the Duke of unbounded ambition, of base ingratitude, of insatiable avarice? From charges like these the writer affects the desire to clear the Duke: but contrives, in each new paragraph, to afford new proofs of their truth.

Then setting aside the purely personal question, the pamphlet turns to discuss the war. How long, it is asked, are we to fight? Till we have lost a battle? or till we have completed our tale of victories by one that will crown them all? If we are to wait for a crowning victory, is Bouchain a proof that we are advancing from our achievements at Hochstadt and Ramillies at Lille and 'Tournay? In dwelling on this last paltry success, do we not show something of the blind adoration of a mother for her latest born, whose defects are condoned in the thought that he must be the last? Dr. Hare had lamented the proneness of men to lapse from perseverance in continued effort. But there are limits to the possibility of perseverance. The most ardent hunter must rest when his legs refuse to carry him further. Be our will what it may, if we go on much longer with the war, we shall have nothing left to fight for. In the camp, you do not feel its pressure, with your elaborate luxury and your ample pay. But we feel it, in the

growing lists of bankrupts, in the empty shops, in the untilled farms, in the beggared landowners around us. The stock-jobbers rejoice, because to them the burdens of the nation are a source of wealth. But their joy is no guide for national policy.

In the *Comments on the Sermon*, it is hinted that the present Ministers might have reaped as much glory as their predecessors from the war, had they been content to postpone the interests of the nation to their own. But this was not Swift's private opinion: and if he suggested the hint, it is only another instance of what his biographer must admit to be a characteristic of his political tracts. Strictly accurate in any private account of a transaction or of a fact, his controversial conscience was yet elastic enough as to the weapons he employed in fight. In this instance, as both his letters and his *Journal* show, he was clearly of opinion that upon the peace the Ministry must stand or fall. If war continued, Marlborough and the Whigs would be supreme.

The negotiations were now actively set on foot. Swift's friend Prior had, in June of this year, been entrusted with what was meant to be a secret mission to the Court of France. As ill-luck would have it, when Prior landed at Deal on his return in August, he fell into the hands of a fussy official, by whom he was detained for instructions: and meanwhile the secret was out. The same messenger that carried the request for instructions from the Secretary, seems also to have conveyed information to the leaders of the Whigs. The Government were thus driven into

a more open avowal of their intentions as to a peace. The *Post-boy*,¹ now the official paper, threw out surmises as to its possible terms, which were intended, by their suggestions, to draw out the opinion of the people.

It was necessary, however, to meet the talk about Prior's journey, and this Swift set himself to do. Summoning his printer, he dictated at a sitting a mock account of the journey, professedly translated from the French. The pamphlet has just that amount of banter skilfully mixed with serious purpose, that left men ten times more mystified than before. The story is put into the mouth of a valet, whose pride makes him assume the guise of secretary to his Excellency the Plenipotentiary, while he is made to reveal the flunkey at every turn. Nothing could better cover the gossips with ridicule: and the digressions, natural to such a narrator, served for the side touches that were meant to tell. Scraps of conversation, picked up by eavesdropping, are retailed in order to hint that Prior had been straining for terms as severe as would have been asked by the most warlike Whigs. Nothing proves the success of the pamphlet better than that, while the gossips were mystified, Prior felt his dignity wounded at the semblance which the story bore to truth.

As irritation against the allies grew, so feeling gravitated in favour of the peace. But the opposition was formidable: and it was swelled by others

¹ Opposed to the *Protestant Post-boy*, which, edited by Abel Boyer, became the organ of the Whigs.

than the Whigs. Nottingham, whose rigid but respectable obstinacy had been a thorn in the side of one Government after another, now stood out against the Tory peace. He was toasted in Whig companies, and was assured that it was "he would save England at last." Shrewsbury, the "King of Hearts," whose popularity was a tower of strength, joined Nottingham's standard of revolt. They allied themselves with the Whigs: and this strange confederacy was paid for by the Whigs agreeing to revive the much-decried Bill against Occasional Conformity, under the new title of a Bill for preserving the Protestant religion. Amongst all the strange twists of politics in these months none was more curious than this. Swift's part in what followed was eharacteristic.

The expedient which this strange alliance attempted was one so intricate, and at the same time so hazardous, as to be hardly credible. Oxford, it was hoped from his known moderation, would be so far alive to the evils of the Bill, as to oppose it, and, by so doing, break the alliance between himself and the extreme Tories. That alliance it was the chief object of the Whigs to break. But they miscalculated their forces, even though they had allies on whom they could scarcely have counted. The Dissenting clergy, it appears, consented to the project of reviving a Bill that would deprive their sects of the only loophole from civil disabilities, in the hope of outwitting the Ministers. They overshot the mark. When Parliament met soon after, both Houses accepted the Bill: and the Dissenters were forced at last to appeal for

aid to Lord Oxford, against whom they had conspired. The reply to their appeal was entrusted to Swift : and nothing could have given him an opportunity more according to his taste. He disliked the Dissenters as a body with intense consistency : he was not sorry to see them caught in a noose of their own tying : he despised the hypocrisy which had brought them as suppliants to the feet of the man whom they had sought to overthrow. The letter is a mixture of reproof, sarcasm, and contempt. He disdains to make use of the opportunity, perhaps open to one more versed in the tricks of politics, of currying favour with an important class. He launches out against them as “Epicureans in act, Puritans in profession, politicians in conceit.” “Poor deluded creatures, that have for seventeen years been acting against all their principles, and the liberty of this nation, without leaving so much salt as to keep the body of them sweet.” The manœuvres of which they have been guilty are mercilessly exposed : and without one word of conciliation, the Lord Treasurer tells them roundly, that he will act only as justice guides him, careless of their solicitations or of their schemes. Deliberate sarcasm seldom enters so fully into what was virtually a State paper, as it does into this letter drawn up by Swift.

But the Dissenters formed only one contingent of the confederacy. To meet another member of it, Lord Nottingham, the best weapon was ridicule : and Swift in his *Hue and Cry after Dismal*—the name which Nottingham’s gloomy face and still gloomier

disposition had won for him—supplied the needed weapon. Advertisements were issued offering a reward of ten shillings for “information that might lead to the recovery of a very tall, thin, swarthy complexioned man” who had “been seduced to follow ill courses.” The attack was the more hearty, as Swift really believed that there was corruption at the root of the scheme. In the *Journal*, he expresses his certainty that Nottingham had actually been bribed.

Late in the autumn appeared the most important contribution to the controversy dividing the nation. This was Swift's *Conduct of the Allies*. From the *Journal*, we can tell pretty accurately the time during which he was at work on it. On the 30th of October he seems to have been only beginning. Official papers were at his disposal: but a mass of evidence had to be sifted: motives had to be placed in a clear light: arguments had to be marshalled in the most effective order: and the issue before the nation had to be made so plain that he who ran might read. But complicated and delicate as was the task, the pamphlet was published on the 27th of November; in a week it had run through four editions: and December was not well begun, before a mass of feeling had been stirred to the quick by the teachings of Swift's words. It was in the mouths of men: it changed the aspect of the party struggle: it became a storehouse of arguments: it was quoted in the Parliamentary debates. No pleasure was to Swift so great as that of the sense of power which the reception of such a pamphlet, at such a crisis, gave.

It was not in his nature to treat with elaborate minuteness the details of statistical facts. They have no fascination for himself, and he knows they will be worthless for the purposes he has in view. But although details are never allowed to be cumbrous, it is perfectly evident that Swift, in preparing the pamphlet, has sifted evidence, examined treaties, made himself master of official documents, to an extent never equalled in any other of his works. Yet to the rapid composition of the book is due much of its sustained and telling force. He writes under the impulse of one strong mood of indignation, which has no time to vary or calm down; and it is his special strength to infect his hearers with the same heat of anger. Impressed with the sense of the wrongs under which the nation labours, he appeals against the folly that mistakes "the Echo of a London Coffee-house" for the "Voice of the Kingdom." We have gone wrong far too long: we have endured two wars of ten years each, for objects not our own: if we wait for five years longer, our ruin will be complete. We have been principals where we should at most have been auxiliaries: have fought where we should not, and abstained where our interests were at stake: we have allowed our allies, who charge us with deserting them, to falsify every engagement which they made to us. We have endured the struggle: but it has been by mortgaging the nation, till we are burdened with fifty millions of debt.¹ We have taken

¹ The debt, he hints, was a vile contrivance of Burnet's, to prop up a shaky party by making it the interest of creditors to preserve the continuity of a Government which owed them money.

cities; but each has cost us six millions: and they have been won for our allies, not for ourselves. We have gained victories, but they have brought us barren renown: and now we are “expiring of a hundred good symptoms.”

With marvellous skill, then, he shows that the nation was pursuing war in a spirit of blind and lethargic folly: and that the energy which indignation would rouse, should be spent not in prosecuting war, but in shaking ourselves free of the thralldom of misguided counsels. It would have been comparatively easy to rouse an energetic impulse to war: it required far more art to rouse that energy to the making of peace: to show the nation that in ending the war it was proving its vigour; in continuing it, was proving its slavish and inert subservience to a selfish clique. But this is just what Swift does. Having shown the ruin that stares the nation in the face if war goes on, he next makes political capital out of the causes that he assigns for its prosecution thus far—the rapacity of Marlborough: the sordid greed of the monied class, who batten on the nation’s sufferings: and the anxiety of the Whig clique first to obtain, and then to cling to, their employments and offices. The rapacity of Marlborough he exposes freely enough, but yet with an affectation of touching it lightly, as a personal matter which he will not press. The monied men he boldly repudiates in the name of his party, and throws upon the Whigs the burden of an unpopular alliance. He rejoices that the accession of a Tory Ministry produced a fall of

credit: "it seemed," he thinks, "as if the young extravagant heir had got a new steward, and was resolved to look into his estate before things grew desperate, which made the usurers forbear feeding him with money as they used to do." The selfishness of the Whig place-hunters makes them blind to miseries they do not suffer. "I have heard a man very sanguine upon the riches of England, with a good employment for life, and a hundred thousand pounds in the funds, bidding us take courage and warranting that all would go well. This is the style of men at ease, who lay heavy burdens upon others, which they would not touch with one of their fingers." In almost exactly the same terms Swift spoke twenty years later, against the selfish place-holders of Ireland.

Just before the pamphlet was published, Marlborough, whose name was a terror to Swift and his patrons, came back to London in November (1711), to become the active centre of Whig intrigue. Just at this moment the suspicions of danger from such intrigue had been increased. For the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's birth, a procession, it was ascertained, had been organized by the Whigs, to revive the memory of Shaftesbury and his apprentice-boys, and of the days when triumphant Whiggism had dictated to the throne. Swift, in the *Journal*, hints that the scheme was more ridiculous than dangerous: but he did not scruple to help the Government by denouncing the motives of its concocters. In a pamphlet published at the time he hints at plots for assassination, and aims a side hit at Marlborough in

a suggestive allusion to Masaniello of Naples. The scheme was all the more heartily denounced by Swift, inasmuch as some, like Garth and Steele, who had assumed the right of passing judgment on what they held to be Swift's apostacy, were thought to be concerned in the device.

But when Parliament met on the 6th of December (1711), the real brunt of opposition had to be met. Nottingham led the attack in the Lords, and strove to pin the Government to certain terms which were intended to wreck the project of peace. Oxford raised an objection of form: his own colleague, the Duke of Buckingham, jealous of his chief, set aside the point. The House was in the mood that makes a false step fatal—a mood much like that which makes the wolves dog the footsteps of a tottering horse. Nottingham's motion was carried by 61 voices to 55.

The danger was undoubtedly great: and to Swift it appeared overwhelming. But Oxford possessed—and it was perhaps one of the chief grounds of Swift's admiration—a stony apathy that passed for calmness. He showed no loss of nerve: while Swift regarded the game as lost, was already counting the penalty that the losers would have to pay, and feared, in prospect, that fall which, when it came, left him resolute and unshaken. He longed for a possible retreat from the storm. He knew the exasperation that he had provoked. He was vexed by the remissness, and the perverse wrangling of the Ministers; he was plagued by the utter smallness of the aims, the

pettiness of the intrigues, the ignoble self-seeking, that were spoiling all.

For three weeks the suspense lasted. But safety came to the Government from the gradual decline of Marlborough in popularity with the nation. He and his secretary Cardonnell, were proved to have received commissions for which the precedent was doubtful, and for which even precedent could scarcely serve as a defence. Oxford followed up the blow. On the 30th of December, Marlborough was deprived of all his appointments, and on the 31st, a majority was secured in the House of Lords by the creation of twelve new peers.

At once the Ministry and their supporters breathed more freely. Nothing could have been more complete than the Whig collapse. To all appearance the cause to which Swift had attached himself, the cause for which he had fought so well, had a long triumph before it. How long that triumph lasted, and what was Swift's reward for the part he had in securing it, has next to be seen.

CHAPTER X

THE TORY TRIUMPH AND SWIFT'S REWARD

January, 1711², to June, 1713

ÆTAT. 44-45

Better prospects of Swift's friends—Misgivings after the fight—His discernment of the weak points of his friends—Delicacy of his position—His power of dispensing favours, and his use of it—King, Barber, Tooke, Mrs. Manley, Diaper—Bitterness of Party—Prince Eugene's visit—The Peace drawing nearer—The fury and the fears of the Whigs—The Mohawks—*Hannibal at our Gates*—Symptoms of Disunion—*Letter to the October Club*—Hostilities stopped—Swift's loneliness amid society—His illness—The Preliminaries announced—St. John created Viscount Bolingbroke—The Paper Tax—*The Last Four Years of the Queen*—The Bandbox plot—The Duke of Hamilton's death—Swift's sympathy for his widow—Lady Ashburnham's death—The end of Harrison—*The Proposal for improving the English Tongue*—Its literary aim—The Peace of Utrecht—Swift's reflections thereon—He claims his reward—Negotiations with the Ministers—Swift gazetted as Dean of St. Patrick's—His quarrel with Steele—Quits England for his new post—Installed as Dean.

DURING the next eighteen months, Swift appears to us in a new light. We have seen him gradually drawn into closer contact with those who had assumed the reins of government. Wearied by the

indifference of the Whigs, he had welcomed a change which promised well for his Church. There was something adventurous in the attack upon the solid phalanx of the Whig aristocracy which attracted his fancy. Personal feeling had done the rest: and almost without knowing it Swift had found himself the chief defender of a Ministry whose future seemed to hang on a narrow issue. Lastly, the very attacks that were made upon his consistency gave him a new stimulus to the adopted task. Once he had begun the fray, he found himself more and more persuaded of the rightness of his cause.

If the preceding months had been darkened by clouds, it would seem as if the horizon were now clearing. The ministerial policy became more firm. The secret negotiations through the Abbé Gualtier, the visits of Mesnager to England, and of Prior to France, were giving place to more decided steps towards securing peace. Now that the Ministers had summoned courage to create a majority in the Lords by calling up twelve new peers, their opponents seemed for the moment to be paralysed. With the dismissal of Marlborough, their chief danger was over. For weeks Swift had lived in dread: he had looked forward only to hiding himself at Laracor, and told Stella that the words of Wolsey were ever ringing in his ears, as those which it would be his lot to utter:

“A weak old man, battered with storms of State,
Is come to lay his weary bones among you.”

In December, while his tract on *The Conduct of*

the Allies had been selling by tens of thousands, his printer had been summoned by Chief Justice Parker¹ to answer for the publication, and Swift had seen in this action, the symptoms of that confidence which Parker felt in the downfall of the cause of which Swift had been the principal champion. But now, as suddenly, the aspect of things had changed. Marlborough, whose power was reckoned so secure that Ministers had sought to temporize with him, had now fallen at their first firm act. The Duchess of Somerset still retained her place at Court; but even her dismissal seemed only a matter of time. Walpole, the late Secretary for War, for whom Swift cherished an almost prophetic antipathy, was accused of malappropriation of public money and committed to the Tower.

Swift might have been pleased: but he was not. If the chief danger was over, the adventure which had given excitement to the struggle was also gone. Swift's hold of a successful cause always relaxed, as success seemed more assured, and the same may now to some extent have been the case. But he saw other dangers, perhaps, of no less gravity, in the future. Now that a foretaste of victory came, he hesitated, wavered, and lost hope. Fully persuaded of the necessity of the peace, he had felt no doubts in

¹ Chief Justice Parker, who had been one of the chief managers against Sacheverell, was appointed to succeed Holt before the Whigs lost power. Two years later, being present at a trial in the Court of Queen's Bench, Swift picked up and handed to Parker a pen which he had dropped. He had a mind, he says, to have told him that he returned good for evil: "for he would have taken mine from me."—*Journal*, Oct. 28, 1712.

advocating it. He had pressed to the utmost a few salient points—the expense of the war, the burden on the nation, with its failing resources, and the selfish objects of the Dutch. The chief topics selected, in later times, both for the defence, and for the reprobation of the Treaty—the wisdom of the commercial articles, by its advocates, and the abandonment of our allies in the Spanish peninsula, by its opponents—scarcely occupied Swift's attention. He kept clearly before him the object of gaining popular support for the policy ; and that popular support had to be won by arguments the most easy to apprehend, and the most likely to rouse the personal predilections of his hearers.

But now he finds new difficulties in the way. Perhaps, without admitting it to himself, Swift had his doubts about the capacity of his patrons, to carry the whole to fulfilment. He is uneasy about the means. The creation of the twelve peers, he says, “is an expedient I do not like, if we could have found any other.” He has misgivings even about Marlborough's dismissal. “If the Ministry,” he says, “be not sure of a peace, I shall wonder at this step, and do not approve it at the best.” He fears that the dismissal is the effect of the personal resentment of the Queen and Lord Oxford : and “I do not love,” he says, “to see personal resentment mix with public affairs.” “Although I love him not,” he says again of Marlborough, “I am sure now he is down, I shall not trample on him : I dislike his being out.” He is vexed to the death by the inertness, the indecision,

the shiftiness of the Lord Treasurer. He cannot but see the traits in his own patrons which laid them, in certain respects, open to ridicule, although personal regard made him try to close his eyes. Nothing can be more characteristic than his passing sarcasm on their reception of the death of his own chief enemy. "It is a good jest," he says a few months later than this, upon Godolphin's death, "to hear the Ministers talk of him with humanity and pity, because he is dead, and can do them no hurt."¹

This very clearness of vision was a torture now, as it ever was, to Swift. The keenness of his appetite for the controversy, the tenacity with which he pursued the faults of his opponents, the personal attachment he formed for those whose defence he had undertaken, all kept him to his post. But he doubted the final issue, and despised the strategy. He forced himself to fight: but with an underlying doubt of the work in which he was engaged.

All this told upon his character. Each year deepened the bitterness of his cynicism as it added to his knowledge of what, in human nature, was worthy of contempt. He found his friends, like his enemies, striving less for principles than for place. Yet he saw that he had bound himself to a party, must bear attack as its mouthpiece, must look to it, and it only, for promotion. The position was to the last degree irksome for a character like that of Swift: and in the armour of apparent arrogance with which he covered himself, in the uneasy restlessness which,

¹ Godolphin died in September, 1712.

day by day, embittered his temper, we see the havoc that it wrought.

But it would be absurd to suppose that this uneasiness, much as it haunted Swift, was with him always. No one was more ready than he to take what was pleasant in his lot: and that lot gave him the opportunity, in which he delighted, of helping his friends. Dr. William King,¹ that strange and thriftless specimen of a Tory wit, was by Swift's influence, made Gazetteer, a snug post of two hundred a year, which Steele's obstinacy had lost to him, and which King's idleness made him throw up before a year was out. Lord Rivers was now Master of the Ordnance in succession to the Duke of Marlborough: and through him again, Swift found a means of gratifying his bookseller and printer—Tooke,² and Barber³—for the danger they had incurred on his behalf. The place of Stationer to the Ordnance was vacant: Swift begged it for the two: and it was granted with the usual arts that a courtier uses towards those whose favour he designs to gain. "Dr. Swift," Lord Rivers assured Tooke and Barber, "had commanded him, and he durst not refuse it." Nor was a second place,⁴ which had generally been

¹ As to this Dr. William King, see above, Chap. VI. p. 226, in connexion with his attack on the *Tale of a Tub*.

² Of Tooke, we have seen something, in the correspondence relating to the fifth edition of the *Tale of a Tub*, with the *Apology* (1709).

³ Barber owed to Swift's patronage at this time the opportunity of achieving commercial success and of amassing a fortune. He continued to be Swift's friend till death, and when he became Lord Mayor, in Swift's old age, he paid attention to Swift's recommendations in his own patronage.

⁴ To serve the Ordnance with oil.

attached to the post, and was claimed by Tooke and Barber, refused to Swift's petition on their behalf. Another of Swift's helpers had been Mrs. de la Rivière Manley;¹ and she too claimed some reward. But it seemed as if she was soon to pass with her ribaldries and her frailties beyond the reach of help.

"Poor Mrs. Manley," he says, "the author, is very ill of a dropsy and sore leg; the printer tells me he is afraid she cannot live long. I am heartily sorry for her: she has very generous principles for one of her sort; and a great deal of good sense and invention: she is about forty, very homely, and very fat."—*Journal*, January 28, 1711².

Other more respectable literary aspirants found a helping hand from Swift. One Diaper, the author of some *Eclogues of the Sea*, seemed to him to have promise enough to merit help. It needed, indeed, but little genius to win the kindly notice of Swift, and the reflection he makes on Diaper's appearance in the world of wits is amusingly characteristic of Swift's odd ignorance of his own place above the little circle and beyond the reach of its petty praises. "I hate," he says, "to have these new wits rise, but when they do rise, I would encourage them: but they

¹ In *The Account of Guiscard's Attempt on Harley: the Comment on Dr. Hare's Sermon*, and the *Vindication of the Duke of Marlborough*, and possibly in some other traets. Though he used her as one of his "under-spur-leathers," Swift was not blind to the vices of her work. It is, he says to Addison, "as if she had about two thousand epithets and fine words packed up in a bag; and that she pulled them out by handfuls, and strewed them on her paper, where about once in five hundred times they happen to be right."—*Swift to Addison*, Aug. 22, 1710.

tread on our heels and thrust us off the stage." Diaper, he says, is "a poor little, short wretch": half parson and half wit: a curate in the country, but in town a loiterer in the tavern, with a sword dangling at his heels. Swift finds no way of helping him, but to make him parson out and out, and to get a living for him from the Lord Keeper Harcourt. But pending this, he collects money for him at the Society, and carries it to the garret where the poor witling, that was treading on his heels, was lying sick and starving like so many of his kind.

Well known as Swift had been before, the publication of the *Conduct of the Allies*, had not only drawn upon him the attention of friend and foe, but had made him the aim of a hundred shafts. The less of principle that was involved, the more bitter became the antagonism of parties. Every incident served to bring it out in full relief. Early in January, the long expected visit of Prince Eugene to England, began, and in its course it produced a singular rivalry. By both sides our victorious ally was *fêted* and dined: by the Whigs because they hailed him as the opponent of the peace: by the Tories because they could not allow the belief to grow that one who shared the nation's triumphs was less honoured by Tory than by Whig. It was expected, Swift tells us, that forty thousand Whigs would meet him at landing, and renew their efforts at agitation defeated two months before. But, as it turned out, his arrival roused more of curiosity than political enthusiasm. The Ministry, now triumphant in all but the continuance of the

Duchess of Somerset at Court, was proceeding with more resolution to the settlement of the peace. The Duke of Ormond was sent to the seat of war in place of Marlborough ; and it was distinctly understood that his task was to be, to hold his own hand and that of the allies.¹ The Whigs fretted themselves to the quick, but fretted themselves in vain. Men fought with weapons that were strange even to the proverbial bitterness of such conflicts. Vehement as Swift was, his was not the most unscrupulous invective. Society was ranged, during these months, into two hostile camps, assailing one another not by sarcasm and contemptuous denunciation only, but by open charges of instigating to plots and riots and assassinations. Every alarm of the town was distorted into some machination of the Whigs : every rumour of civilities to the French was believed to imply a pervading Jacobite taint amongst the Tories. During March and April, the streets were disturbed by the worse than foolish escapades of the hell-rakes of the town, who were known by the names of Mohawks, or Hawkubites, the lineal descendants of the "Hectors," the "Muns," and the "Tityre tus "

¹ It was now that Swift wrote the *Remarks on the Barrier Treaty* (of 1709, by which we had bound ourselves to defend the Dutch frontier). This was followed by a second, and less known, pamphlet, called *The Remarks on the Barrier Treaty Vindicated, in a Letter to the Author*. This also has sometimes been ascribed to Swift : but Mr. Dilke (*Papers of a Critic*), on better grounds, supposes it to have been the work of St. John ; and he shows that it contains a hint of a possible return to the Stuart line, provided that the Pretender were to become a Protestant : a scheme to which St. John seems to have been inclined, and which is consistent with the reserve of his statement, in the Letter to Windham, that no formed intention of a Jacobite restoration had yet obtained.

of other days. Swift compares them with the Houghers of Cattle in Ireland, whose exploits were familiar to him: but even the excuse of class hatred, or of antipathy of creed and of race, was absent in the case of the overfed insolents who now rendered the streets of London dangerous. Women were not safe from their cruelties: and he who was unfortunate enough to cross their path at night, seldom escaped without some mark, in a slit nose or ear, which he would carry to his grave. With apparently but little foundation, these coarse and blood-thirsty bullies were reckoned by the Tories to be bands organized by the Whigs. Swift, at least, accepts the common belief: and knowing how obnoxious he was to the other party, he was forced to spend money that he could ill spare on coaches, so as not to pass through the streets after dark on foot.

Meanwhile the peace was surely advancing. The chief guide in all the negotiations was St. John. Bishop Robinson and Lord Strafford—the former a careful man of business, the latter a man “of little capacity or literature, but immeasurable pride”¹—were little else than mouthpieces of the Secretary at home. According to instructions, they kept up cordial relations with the envoys of France: and the fact was enough to redouble the denunciations of the Whigs. “Hannibal,” it was said,² “was at our gates:” in other words, the Ministers were in league with the

¹ *Journal*, Feb. 15, 1711².

² This was the title of a pamphlet which had much vogue, and the forebodings of which were answered in another, under the title, *Hannibal not at our Gates*.

Pretender. The knell of the Protestant Constitution, so they prophesied, was about to be rung.

Once aroused, this new note of alarm rapidly increased in strength. Swift tells us for himself, with indubitable sincerity, whatever may have been his accuracy, that there was no more fear of the Pretender than there was of the Grand Turk. From first to last there is not a shadow of foundation for the idea that Swift did not abhor any thought of a Jacobite restoration, as strongly as the most fervid Whig.¹ To suppose otherwise would be to trust to the unsupported attacks of his enemies, against his own consistent declaration, against all probability, against the tenor of his expressions to his most intimate friends. At a later day the suspicion took definite shape:² but it was repudiated by Swift with an energy of indignation that it was not in his nature to have assumed from motives of expediency.

But although fears of Jacobitism did not make Swift uneasy, he is not so confident about other matters. He doubts the ability of the Ministers to carry the peace. He hates this "driving everything to an inch." He longs for some decisive action. He

¹ An unlucky passage in the *Conduct of the Allies*, suggesting that the Dutch stipulations against the Pretender might take it out of the power of the Legislature to alter the succession, however much the necessities of the kingdom might require it, was interpreted by Chief Justice Parker as treasonable. Swift altered it in later editions: but it is clear that the passage, as it originally stood, instead of being favourable to the Jacobite claim, only affirmed distinctly the right of Parliament to carry out a revolution destructive of hereditary right.

² See Chap. XII. vol. ii. p. 12, and the letter from Delafaye to Archbishop King, there printed.

dreads the trimming of the Lord Treasurer with the Whigs. He dreads the hesitation of the Queen. He dreads still more the ominous signs of disunion amongst the colleagues. He dreads the fanatical partizanship of the extreme Tories of the October Club. To meet this last, he prints a *Letter to the October Club*,¹ in which the moderation of the Ministry is accounted for by vague intimations of difficulties that have to be avoided, of hindrances that lie in the way, of eventual rearrangement of matters such as would please the heartiest supporters of sound principles against the violence of the common enemy, the Whigs. Swift had here the task hardest of all—to prove to others the absence of those causes of disquietude, by which he was himself at the moment seriously disturbed.

Swift moved about amid a brilliant society, to all appearance the most successful of the throng—attended by suitors, the patron of literature, caressed by the great, the resort of all who had a cause to be advanced: and yet, amongst them all, with scarcely a friend whom he could count sincere. Before we condemn Swift for taking such a position, we must not forget what motives called him to it. The desire to play a man's part in shaping the results of a European war; the determination to aid in crushing a faction whose specious principles he believed to be a cloak for selfishness: the ambition to hold his own amongst those whom fortune had made great—these roused him to the work, and unswerving courage made him

¹ See Scott's *Swift*, vol. iv. p. 81.

persevere. But his vision was too clear, not to show him how much was contemptible on the stage on which he acted.¹

During April he was further troubled by a tedious and painful illness which he calls the shingles. On the symptoms of it, he dwells with a detail sufficient to remind us that we are dealing with a man whose modes of thought were peculiar, and with an age when delicacy was not excessive, and whose modes of expression differed from our own. The illness was only a short interruption to the activity of his pen. Besides the *Letter to the October Club*, he had written in February, the *Fable of Midas*, a short poem which ridiculed the avarice of Marlborough. As soon as convalescence came, in May, he was busy upon another pamphlet,² the object of which was to prove that under the guise of Whig principles, the leaders of the Whig party were seeking only to embarrass the Administration, and drive the Ministers from office: that independence of thought and action, a real adherence to true Whig principles, and a thorough abhorrence of arbitrary power, were to be found, not amongst the opponents, but amongst the supporters, of the Ministry. "We are Whigs,"

¹ "I cannot leave this place in prudence or honour. And I never wished so much as now, that I had staid in Ireland; but the die is cast, and is now a-spinning, and till it settles, I cannot tell whether it will be an ace or a six."

² *Some Reasons to prove that no one is obliged, by his Principles as a Whig, to oppose the Queen; in a Letter to a Whig Lord.* The Whig Lord is supposed, on the authority of an MS. note by Charles Ford, to have been Lord Ashburnham, the son-in-law of Swift's friend and patron, the Duke of Ormond.

he virtually makes the Opposition say, "and as such we claim the assistance of all Whigs to oust the Ministers, no matter what their principles are, and however near they come to our own." "Remain Whigs," say Swift's friends, "and profess as freely as you will your principles: but have loyalty enough to support us as the Ministers of the Queen, until we are proved to have acted against those principles that you profess." The pamphlet was followed up by a mock letter from the Pretender to Lord Wharton, which threw upon that prominent Whig the suspicion of Jacobitism so freely cast at the Ministers.

At last success, which covers so many sins in politics, came to Swift's friends. On the 6th of June, the outlines of the peace preliminaries were announced. They were accepted by the nation with a feeling of relief. From all parts of the country, addresses poured in, congratulating the Queen on the prospect of peace and the securities by which it was to be accompanied. Even Whigs sent in congratulatory memorials: and their ill-will was shown only in the emphasis with which they declared their confidence in the securities for the Protestant succession, which they felt sure Her Majesty would take.

On the 4th of July, St. John, to whom the chief management of the peace had been entrusted, was ennobled by the title of Viscount Bolingbroke. By a fatal mistake he allowed jealousy of his rival's honours to persuade him to surrender his own vantage position in the Commons. Even in the accomplishment of his wish he was doomed to disappointment:

instead of gaining rank equal to that of Harley's earldom, he attained only to the inferior grade in the peerage. The slight that this implied probably vexed him more than the title pleased him.

The last remnant of doubt as to the ministerial policy had passed away; and it was now deemed needful to check the utterances of those who attacked with too much boldness the course to which the Government stood committed. For every pamphlet that Swift or his understrappers had written, there had appeared a score of abusive replies. "If I wrote a pamphlet on a straw," says Swift, "I believe it would be answered by the score." Prosecutions had been tried, partly at Swift's own instigation:¹ but only with the natural result of inflaming the bitterness of the pamphleteers. Now the more efficacious machinery of a prohibitory tax was put in force. The impost of a halfpenny on each paper began with August: and before that, Swift had prophesied that "Grub Street" had but ten days to live. A fortnight later he writes (Aug. 7, 1712):—

"Do you know that Grub Street is dead and gone last week? No more ghosts or murders now for love or money. . . . The *Observer* is fallen: the *Medleys*² are jumbled together with the *Flying Post*:³ the *Examiner* is deadly sick: the *Spectator* keeps up and doubles its price; I know not how long it will hold."

Meanwhile Bolingbroke had been received with

¹ *Journal*, Oct. 28, 1712.

² The *Medley* was one of the Whig papers that had answered Swift's *Examiner*. Mainwaring had been its chief conductor.

³ The *Flying Post* was the Whig paper, conducted by Ridpath, who has obtained a place in the *Dunciad*.

lavish honours in Paris, as envoy for the completion of the peace. A suspension of arms was signed in August. The Duke of Hamilton was named as plenipotentiary to arrange the final terms of the peace. With singular recklessness, Bolingbroke contrived to give ground for the suspicions of the Opposition, by apparent familiarity with the Pretender: and amidst outcries against the betrayal of our allies and the tampering with our liberties, the peace was drawing to a final stage.

In September, 1712, Swift, who had gone earlier in the summer to the Gravel-pits at Kensington, for change of air, moved for a time to Windsor, where the Court was now fixed, and where he always found his surroundings specially attractive. It was here that we must suppose he wrote the work to which in later days he gave the name of the *History of the Last Four Years of the Queen*.¹ Particular references and passages in the work must remain uncertain. But there runs through the whole the spirit rather of the uneasy partizan, provoked at opposition and eager to invent calumnies against his opponents, than the ardour of the free champion who has no misgivings as to the cause which he defends. If the impression is correct, it only serves as an additional proof of the cloud of doubt and hesitation that surrounded Swift, not from any relenting to his opponents, not from any infidelity to the main aim of the ministerial policy, but from want of confidence in the resolution and the prudence of his friends.

¹ See Appendix III.

When the Ministers returned after the autumn recess, the business of the Treaty was again resumed ; and the month of November was marked by two incidents that startled the town. One of these forms a strange comment on the tensivity of party feeling. A bandbox was sent to the Lord Treasurer : and Swift being in the room with Oxford at the time, undertook to open it. He did this with some care, and found two inkhorns (cases for ink and pens) filled with gunpowder, and containing bullets. The contrivance seemed too flimsy for a real attempt at assassination, yet too serious for a mere practical joke. Whig lampoons attributed it to Swift's own contrivance as a means of enhancing his favour with the Minister. Such a theory is disproved by the very simple consideration that a self-contrived alarm would have sought more serious implements : to us, knowing Swift's real feelings to the Ministers, and how lightly he held their favour, it is not only impossible, but absurd.

The other incident has in it so much of dramatic interest as to have formed a chapter in a classic fiction. The Duke of Hamilton and his Duchess were amongst Swift's intimates. The Duchess was then about thirty-three : " with abundance of wit and spirit . . . handsome and airy, and seldom sparing anybody that gave her the least provocation, by which she has many enemies and few friends." So Swift writes of her : and this was a type of character not unlikely to attract him. Her husband was then at the height of power and influence, and august antiquity of race,

aided by his talents, had acquired for him a foremost place in society. As plenipotentiary to France, he had expressed a desire that Swift should join his train. On the 30th of October, Swift had met him and received from him the friendly, though homely, compliment of a present of snuff. On the morning of the 15th of November, all the town was startled by the news that the Duke had, the night before, been stabbed in the back, after a duel in Hyde Park, where he had killed the already notorious Lord Mohun. The whole affair was involved in doubt and darkness. The duel had arisen from some violent words used over a legal dispute—such at least was the cause outwardly assigned: and when one of the principals had fallen, it seems to have changed into a general *mêlée*. Rightly or wrongly it was assumed by the Tories to have been another of the Whiggish plots.

To Swift fell, in great measure, the duty of combating the frantic grief of the Duchess. "It is not possible," he says, "for anybody to be a greater loser in all regards. She has moved my very soul." He saw it was useless to attempt, at first, any assuaging of the passion of sorrow. "She never grieved," he says again, "but raged and stormed and railed." The first thing is to bring around her the friends whom her caprices and her bitter tongue had alienated. Her sister-in-law, Lady Orkney¹—"the wisest woman," says Swift, "I ever knew"—is brought by

¹ Lady Orkney, whose connexion with William III. is well known, had married the younger brother of the Duke.

him to visit her. "I am resolved," he says, "to make them friends: for the Duchess is now no more the object of envy, and must learn humility from the severest master, Affliction." In sorrow, as much as in prosperity, such as she sought the aid of Swift. In prosperity his wit and cynicism amused them: but, unlike most cynics, he had the tenderness that knew how to tutor grief.

Early in January, that same tenderness is roused by the death of Lady Ashburnham, the daughter of the Duke of Ormond. She was "his greatest favourite," and his grief for the young life so suddenly snatched away moves the vein of almost despairing melancholy so easily stirred in Swift. "I hate life when I think it exposed to such accidents; and to see so many thousand wretches burdening the earth, while such as her die, makes me think God did never intend life to be a blessing." He cannot shake off the feeling of sadness: yet his sympathy with those on whom the bereavement has fallen most heavily, is linked with perception of the odd guise in which even real sorrow sometimes dresses itself. The affectation of grief in Lady Betty Butler, Lady Ashburnham's sister, moved only his disgust. He was received by her with the ordinary ceremonial of affliction in the days of Queen Anne. "The jade was in bed in form, and she did so cant, she made me sick." Even the sincerer grief of the mother was not spared by Swift's morbid acuteness of vision. "There is something," he says, "of farce in all these mournings, let them be ever so serious. People will pretend to

grieve more than they really do, and that takes off from their true grief."

The blow is followed by another which touches Swift to the quick, although the victim was more humble, and though Swift's acquaintance dated merely from a year or two, and depended largely upon favours he had been able to bestow. We have seen the interest that he took in little Harrison. He had procured for him the promising post of secretary to the envoys at Utrecht. Harrison had now come to London on some special mission, and Swift receives him as a son. But Swift finds that the promised salary had not been forthcoming, and that with the usual remissness of the Treasury in these days, "they have never paid him a groat though I have teased their hearts out." The "Queen's Minister" was deep in debt: his rank obliged him to use a coach in his visits, and yet he had to borrow money for its hire. A few days later, Swift hears that the poor fellow has fallen ill: he begs and borrows money for him, and sees to his removal to the healthier air of Knightsbridge. The illness increases, and Swift cannot shake off, in the midst of his busy life, the concern he felt for the "poor lad," as he calls him. On the 14th of February, the end came: and it is best told in Swift's own words.

"I took Parnell this morning, and we walked to see poor Harrison. I had the hundred pounds in my pocket. I told Parnell I was afraid to knock at the door: my mind misgave me. I knocked, and his man in tears told me his master was dead an hour before. Think what grief this is to me. I went to his mother, and have been ordering things for his funeral,

with as little cost as possible, to-morrow at ten at night. Lord Treasurer was much concerned when I told him. I could not dine with Lord Treasurer nor any where else ; but got a bit of meat towards evening. No loss ever grieved me so much."

He is pestered in his own sorrow by the mother and sister, whose grief is outrun by their desire to profit by the death. It is characteristic of Swift that he looked back on his unselfish friendship for the unnoticed youth, as a folly rather than an act of kindness. "I shall never have courage," he says, "again to care for making anybody's fortune." What others, more anxious for effect, would have represented as disinterested charity, Swift recognizes in himself as only a weakness that courts superfluous care : and he avenges it on himself by the painful minuteness with which he sees to the just administration of anything that poor Harrison had left.

Amidst cares of politics, and grief for loss of friends, much of Swift's attention was occupied during this year with another subject. Early in the previous spring he had endeavoured to enlist the interest of the Lord Treasurer, who aspired to the fame of a literary patron, in a literary project which was bold enough, but which was strangely out of sympathy, not only with the genius of our language, but more than all with the terse idiom of Swift, moulded as that was by the very impress of his character.¹ He

¹ To a certain extent, the plan is anticipated in the *Tatler* (No. 230), which Swift wrote early in this visit to England, ridiculing the offensive style that was mutilating our colloquial, and even our written language. It is interesting to compare with this what seems to be a well-authenticated reminiscence by Mrs. Pilkington of his later days. "I would have every man," he says to her,

proposed the foundation of an Academy under the protection of the Queen and the Ministers, which should take under its charge the regulation of the English tongue.¹ The hint was of course taken from the French Academy, from the style which had grown up under the patronage of the Grand Monarque, and from the example of the School of Boileau, which Swift had so closely studied. There was thus much of literary foresight in it, that Swift discerned the real lack in our literature which it was to be the business of his own contemporaries to supply. He conceived of it in a narrow way: he mistook the means by which it was to be accomplished. But he saw that literary effort, with no more solid guidance than the English taste prevailing in his own earlier years, would certainly end in hopeless confusion. He had seen the conceits and intricacies of the School of Cowley pass out of fashion. He had seen the taste which preferred the stilted affectation of the rhymed

"write his own English." She assents: but is roughly told, "I am sure you do not understand my meaning." "Very possible, sir," says she, "but I certainly understand my own." She explains it to be, "not to confine oneself to a set of phrases, but to make use of such words as naturally occur on the subject." "Hush," says he, "your husband is coming; I will put the same question to him." He did so: and Mr. Pilkington answered, "To be sure, a man ought to write good English." "Nay, but his own English: I say his own: what do you understand by that?" "Why, sir," said he, "what should I understand?" "Plague on you for a dunce," said he: "were your wife and you to sit for a fellowship, I would sooner give her one than admit you a Sizar."—*Memoirs*, i. p. 118.

¹ The title of the Tract was, "*A Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English Tongue, in a Letter to the most honourable Robert, Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, Lord High Treasurer of Great Britain.*" It was the only piece to which Swift ever attached his name.

drama to Shakespeare, in its own turn pass away. He had wasted effort himself on the fantastic absurdities of the so-called Pindaric ode. But successive variations of taste had not improved our literary judgment. Some standard was needed, if the dunce were to be known from the genius, whose place he now usurped.

Scarcely a year before there had appeared a metrical essay on the rules of criticism, from one who, though little more than a boy, had a judgment ripe enough to select the indisputable commonplaces of criticism and a command of language sufficient to secure for the selected maxims a permanent currency in the mouths of men. Swift must have read Pope's poem, and must have felt sympathy with its motive. Pope had attempted to lay down simple rules for the guidance of taste: Swift might well think, that if the work were to be complete, that also which had been done in France must be done here, and a standard of language imposed. Had he studied the sources of our language, had he considered its mingled elements, and noticed how these moulded idiom, he might have had less hope for his scheme. Fifteen years later, indeed, he was moved to an indignant protest against a French translator's critique on the barbarian genius of *Gulliver's Travels*. His respect for French rigidity may then have been modified; but now he feels so much interest in the scheme as to make the Tract in its favour the one exception to the anonymity of his writings.

The beginning of April, 1713, at length brought the peace. The Treaty was then signed at Utrecht. Swift, if he did not receive the news with rapturous enthusiasm, yet could not but feel pleased at the success of the cause for which he had laboured. The dangers of the present, which were avoided by the peace, were indubitable. "And I do not find," he says to Archbishop King¹ a short time before, "that in public affairs, human wisdom is able to make provisions for futurity which are not liable to a thousand accidents. We have done all we can. For the rest, *curent posteri*." On the 28th of March, he again writes to King, with even more of an apologetic tone :

"After all, my Lord, I grant that from a distant view of things, abundance of objections may be raised against many parts of our conduct. But the difficulties which gave room to these objections are not seen, and perhaps some of them will never appear : neither may it be convenient they should. If in the end it appears that we have made a good bargain for you, we hope you will take it without entering too nicely into the circumstances. I will not undertake to defend our proceedings against any man who will not allow this *postulatum*, that it was impossible to carry on the war any longer : which whoever denies, either has not examined the state of the nation, with respect to its debts, or denies it from the spirit of party. . . . I hope, my Lord, we shall in time unriddle you many a dark problem, and let you see that faction, rage, rebellion, and revenge, and ambition, were deeply rooted in the hearts of those who have been the great obstructors of the Queen's measures and of the kingdom's happiness ; and if I am not mistaken, such a scene may open as will leave the present age

¹ Jan. 3, 171 $\frac{1}{2}$.

and posterity little room for doubt, who were the real friends and real enemies of the country."

Such were Swift's motives in the struggle: such his reflections on the result. How far they were justified it is for history, and not for the biography of Swift, to say. We are concerned only to see with what sincerity he bore his part in the contention of the day.

The immediate result was a clear gain of strength to the Ministry. Men paused for the next move. Was it possible that Oxford contemplated, and might obtain, a coalition of the moderates of both parties? Faction held its hand to watch. But now Swift felt he had done his work: now, if ever, the moment was come when he must claim his reward. Hitherto he had refrained from pressing his own advancement. He had grumbled occasionally in his *Journal to Stella*: he had doubted the solid advantage that might come from the lavish civility and the familiarity with which the Ministers greeted him. "More of your lining, and less of your dining," he says, half angrily, half humorously. But now, self-respect demanded that he should be placed in a position, where the tongue of scandal might not assail him as a penniless priest, ready to do the bidding of a party on the flimsy chance of a reward. His help, if it were to be given longer, must be given from a standpoint of independence; and to secure this he must press his claims with some imperiousness. Were he to forego the claim now, his previous work would be discredited, his influence with the Ministry would be scouted; he would occupy

the most contemptible of all positions—that of a cast-away tool. He had to demand, therefore, from the Ministers, either the fulfilment of their promises, or a statement of their intentions. He now knew, as is clear from the passage below, that the chief obstacle was in the Queen: and if the Ministers found themselves powerless to remove the prejudice against him that the Duchess of Somerset and the Archbishop of York had inspired, he desires only to know it. At length the end came, as it is told in his own words.

“April 13 (1713).—This morning my friend, Mr. Lewis, came to me, and showed me an order for a warrant for three deaneries: but none of them to me. This was what I always foresaw, and received the notice of it, better, I believe, than he expected. I bid Mr. Lewis tell my Lord Treasurer, that I took nothing ill of him, but his not giving me timely notice, as he promised to do, if he found the Queen would do nothing for me. At noon, Lord Treasurer, hearing I was in Mr. Lewis’s office, came to me, and said many things too long to repeat. I told him I had nothing to do but go to Ireland immediately: for I could not with any reputation, stay longer here, unless I had something honourable immediately given to me. We dined together at the Duke of Ormond’s. He then told me he had stopped the warrants for the Deans, that what was done for me might be at the same time, and he hoped to compass it to-night: but I believe him not. I told the Duke of Ormond¹ my intentions. He is content Sterne should be a bishop, and I have St. Patrick’s: but I believe nothing will come of it. Stay I will not: and so I believe, for all you sauncy p p t can say, you may see me in Dublin before April ends. I am less out of humour than you would imagine: and if it were not, that impertinent people will condole with me, as they used to give me joy, I would value it less. But I will avoid company, and muster up my baggage, and send them next Monday by the carrier to

¹ The Duke, as still holding the office of Lord-Lieutenant, had a voice in the arrangement.

Chester, and come and see my willows, against the expectation of all the world. What care I? Night, Dearest Rogues, M.D.

"April 14.— . . . Lord Treasurer told Mr. Lewis, that it should be determined to-night: and so he will for a hundred nights. So he said yesterday, but I valued it not.

"15th.—Lord Bolingbroke made me dine with him to-night (I was as good company as ever) and told me the Queen would determine something for me to-night. The dispute is Windsor or St. Patrick's.

"16th.—Mr. Lewis tells me, that the Duke of Ormond has been to-day with the Queen: and she was content that Dr. Sterne should be Bishop of Dromore, and I Deau of St. Patrick's: but then out came Lord Treasurer, and said, he would not be satisfied, but that I must be Prebendary of Windsor. Thus he perplexes things. I expect neither: but I confess, as much as I love England, I am so angry at this treatment, that if I had my choice, I would rather have St. Patrick's. . . .

"17th.— . . . The Queen says she will determine to-morrow with the Lord Treasurer. The warrants for the deaneries are still stopped for fear I should be gone. Do you think anything will be done? I don't care whether it is or no. . . .

"18th.—This morning Mr. Lewis sent me word, that Lord Treasurer told him the Queen would determine at noon. At three Lord Treasurer sent to me to come to his lodgings at St. James's, and told me the Queen was at last resolved, that Dr. Sterne should be Bishop of Dromore, and I Dean of St. Patrick's. . . . I do not know whether it will yet be done: some unlucky accident may yet come. Neither can I feel joy at passing my days in Ireland: and I confess, I thought the Ministry would not let me go: but perhaps they can't help it. Night, M.D.

"19th.— . . . After dinner Mr. Lewis sent me word, that the Queen staid till she knew whether the Duke of Ormond approved of Sterne for a bishop. I went this evening, and found the Duke of Ormond at the Cockpit, and told him, and desired he would go to the Queen, and approve of Sterne. He made objections: and desired I would name any other deanery: for he did not like Sterne. . . . So all is now broken again. . . . This suspense vexes me worse than anything else."

It was only on the 23rd of April, that the Duke

consented, and that the warrants were signed. Swift was vexed at the vacillation, at the strain which a return, so much under his deserts, had called for, and at the prospect that it opened of long, probably final, banishment to Ireland. The picture of timidity, shuffling, and ingratitude on the part of Oxford, is not a pleasant one. But so far as Swift was concerned, it would be unjust to view his claim as more than the self-assertion which his dignity required. We need not of course look, either in the age or in the man, for the unctuous expressions of disinterested motives with which it is occasionally the modern habit to garnish the natural satisfaction which ecclesiastical preferment brings. Swift had been careful not to choose his profession as a last resort; but once chosen, he looked upon his position in the Church rather as implying a code of discipline with which he was obliged to comply, than as involving a peculiar set of motives by which he was compelled to be animated. To rise in the Church was the sign of his influence: and that influence he was unwilling to surrender. Pride, much more than covetousness, prompted him to demand the satisfaction of his claim.

For the next few weeks Swift was occupied with preparations for his departure, with receiving congratulations from some, and expressions of regret at his going from others—including the Ministers who were themselves its cause. The last weeks of his stay in London, saw him involved in a dispute with Steele, which showed both men in a characteristic light. On the 28th of April, Steele inserted in the *Guardian*

an indignant protest against an attack made by the *Examiner* on Lord Nottingham, but more specially against a cowardly libel on Nottingham's daughter in the same paper. He applied the word "miscreant," not unjustly, to the man who had allowed himself the licence of dragging a lady's name into a controversy where her father only was concerned. The protest was answered in the *Examiner*: and then on 12th May, Steele returned to the charge. This time he wrote in his own name to Nestor Ironside: and after various hits at the supposed author, he proceeds thus:—

"However I will not bear hard upon his contrition: but am now heartily sorry I called him a *Miscreant*: that word I think signifies an unbeliever. *Mescroyant*, I take it, is the old French word. I will give myself no manner of liberty to make guesses at him, if I may say him. . . . I have carried my point and rescued innocence from calumny: and it is nothing to me, whether the *Examiner* writes against me in the character of an estranged friend, or an exasperated mistress."

He then proceeds to hint not obscurely, at other productions by the same author, which answered to those ascribed to Swift. Enough was said, first, to identify Swift with the *Examiner*: next, to throw at him the common charge of scepticism: and lastly, to couple him with poor Mrs. Manley, whom Steele is not ashamed to describe as his own discarded mistress. Swift had in reality long ceased to have anything to do with the *Examiner*: and we can now tell that, at the moment, he was the last man in England to strain his honour in writing against the enemies of the Ministry, with whom he was not too well pleased

just then. Steele can hardly have been ignorant that Swift's connexion with the *Examiner* had ceased : and his subsequent conduct proves that spite, and not ignorance, prompted him in the accusation.

Swift took what he trusted was the easiest means of remonstrating. He wrote to Addison, disclaiming the charge, and accusing Steele of base ingratitude in making it. He asserts what his *Journal* shows to be true, that he had stood Steele's friend with the Ministers, and prevented his dismissal from his post. The letter was clearly meant for Addison to deal with, and it would not have been hard for Addison, knowing both men, to have composed the quarrel, by convincing Steele of the manifest wrong he had done. But once again, as he often did, that calm and regulated spirit refused to sully itself with other men's quarrels. He simply handed the letter to Steele, and left him to reply. Steele's answer was offensive, as only that of a weak and vain man could be. "They laugh at you," he says, beginning with the non-essential point—"if they make you believe your interposition has kept me thus long in my office." As for the charge he made he maintains that it was tempered with mercy out of forbearance for Swift. Swift's disclaimer he affects to treat as a mere trick that none but an Irishman would have attempted. With the assumed sneer of patronage, he congratulates Swift on his new promotion.

For this letter no defence is possible. If Steele believed what he wrote, there was no need to write at all : if he doubted its truth, as it is at least absolutely

certain he had reason to do, he was carried away by vanity, and that spite which ingratitude breeds : if he knew it to be false, as is most probable, his conduct needs no comment. Swift replies in a letter, which indignation would certainly have made much stronger, had not the keen desire so characteristic of him, to clear away the calumnies of one who was once a friend, restrained his wrath. He explains what he had done, or had attempted to do for Steele, and closes his letter thus :—

“ Be pleased to put these questions to yourself :—

“ If Dr. Swift be entirely innocent of what I accuse him, how shall I be able to make him satisfaction ? And how do I know but he may be entirely innocent ? If he was laughed at only because he solicited for me, is that a sufficient reason for me to say the vilest things of him in print under my hand, without any provocation ? And how do I know but he may be in the right, when he says I was kept in my employment at his interposition ? If he never once reflected on me the least in any paper, and has hindered many others from doing it, how can I justify myself, for endeavouring in mine to ruin his credit as a Christian and a clergyman ? ”

To this Steele replies by a flimsy and conditional expression of gratitude for anything Swift may have done, and by boasting of his own independence and nobility of spirit. He closes with some words of what perhaps he lived to think somewhat high-pitched valour, but containing a reminiscence, which, extorted as it was from his spiteful vanity, confirms the impression of the singular attraction exercised by Swift.

“ I do assure you, I do not speak this calmly, after the ill-usage in your letter to Addison, out of terror of your wit, or my

Lord Treasurer's power : but from pure kindness to the agreeable qualities I once so passionately delighted in, in you."

To argue with illogical and irrelevant verbiage like this, was useless : and Swift closes the correspondence, on the eve of starting for Ireland, by simply re-stating the injustice of the charge, and the benefits that had been so gracelessly forgotten. His revenge, as we shall find, was not long delayed.

On Monday the 1st of June, Swift set out from London, riding in six days to Chester, which he reached on the 6th. He went on to Holyhead on the 8th, and reached Dublin on the night of Wednesday the 10th. On the 13th he was installed as Dean of St. Patrick's.

CHAPTER XI

DISSENSION AND ITS FRUITS

June, 1713–August, 1714

ÆTAT. 46

Letter of greeting from Archbishop King—Swift's resentment at its tone—Need of him in London—Difficulties of the Ministry—Opposition to the Treaty—Urgency for Swift's return—His hesitation—Vanessa and her passion—Swift's attempt to soothe it—His discontent with Ireland—Return to England—The Prolocutorship—Attacks from all sides—Walpole's *Short History of the Last Parliament*—Swift to the rescue—Personal attacks—Discussion of the Treaty—Steele and *The Crisis*—The *Public Spirit of the Whigs*—The opening of Parliament—Fears of Jacobite Plots—Swift and the Lords—Steele's expulsion from the House—Dissensions in the Tory ranks—Amusements in the midst of danger—The *Scriblerus* Club—Swift retires to Letcombe—His life there—*Scriblerus* and his prospects—Pope's ambassadorial visit—The struggle between Bolingbroke and Oxford—The Schism Bill—Oxford's Memorial to the Queen—His fall—The illness of the Queen—Confusion in the Ministry—Shrewsbury Lord Treasurer—The Queen's death—Ruin of the Tories—*Note on the Wagstaffe Volume.*

JUST as he was about to start for Ireland, Swift had received a letter from Archbishop King which was scarcely likely to reconcile him to his new position. King and he still continued in a state of watchful, almost suspicious, friendliness. Their language to

one another is that of respect and even of friendly courtesy: but it never deepens into any warmth of regard. The form which the Archbishop's greeting now took, made his regret for the loss of Swift's predecessor perhaps a little more prominent than was necessary: and began with exhortations which were perhaps a little premature.

"Your predecessor in St. Patrick's did a great deal to his church and house, but there is still work for you. He designed a spire for the steeple, which kind of ornament is much wanting in Dublin. He has left your economy clear, and £200 in bank for this purpose. . . . Bricks and lime are good and cheap. But we have no workmen who understand anything of the matter. I believe you may be acquainted with several that are conversant with such kind of work, and, if you would discourse some of them, and push on the work as soon as settled, it might be of use to you, and give the people here an advantageous notion of you."¹

Almost every phrase in the letter was gall and wormwood to Swift. His work was, forsooth, to be the completion of Sterne's design for a useless spire on the top of St. Patrick's tower! He was to use any time in London that was left him to take leave of statesmen and wits, in discussing the merits of bricks and workmen! And if he did this weighty work hopefully, he might give an advantageous notion of himself to the people of Dublin, for whose opinion he did not care a straw! And to crown all, the Arch-

¹ The letter is one which Dr. Mant has printed (*History of Church of Ireland*, ii. 250), out of the mass of MSS. which Archbishop King left to Trinity College, Dublin. The illustrations thrown on Swift's life by the correspondence, seemed to be too slight and too scattered to justify the printing of further extracts in this volume

bishop speaks of St. Patrick's, not even as ordinary courtesy would have demanded, but as "the provision Her Majesty has made for you." Swift answers by expressing his sense that his Grace's loss in Sterne will not be made up by him: and for the steeple, he has not much to say for it; "he is confident no bricks made in that part of Ireland will bear being exposed so much to the air."

We shall return to the surroundings of Swift in his new post, in a later chapter. Scarcely had he now left London, before his need was felt as sorely as he would have wished it to be. On the 2nd of June, indeed, Erasmus Lewis sends a cheerful letter to speed him on his way at Chester. The Ministry had just obtained a triumph. From the moment that the peace was announced, the Opposition had exerted all their efforts to strike a blow at the ministerial credit, and they had apparently a majority in the House of Lords. Descending to the worst depth of faction, the Whig leaders had joined with the discontented Scotch, to procure a repeal of the Act of Union. The division showed a tie: and it was only by the proxies that the Ministers gained the day. But they did gain it: and this triumph Lewis announces to Swift as "the greatest victory we ever had."¹

But the triumph was not lasting. On the 9th of July, Erasmus Lewis wrote as follows:—

"We are all running headlong into the greatest confusion imaginable. Sir Thomas Hanmer is gone into the country this morning, I believe much discontented: and I am very apprehen-

¹ *Lewis to Swift*, 2nd June, 1713.

sive neither Lord Anglesey nor he will continue long with us. I heartily wish you were here : for you might certainly be of great use to us, by your endeavours to reconcile, and by representing to them the infallible consequences of these divisions. We had letters this morning from Ireland. What is the reason I had none from you? Adieu. I hope your health is not the cause."

The difficulties were indeed serious enough. Besides the dispute between Oxford and Bolingbroke, there were other dangers. The Treaty of Commerce, which proposed a system approaching to free trade between England and France, required, as it dealt with finance, to be supplemented by an Act of Parliament. But the commercial and manufacturing class were wedded to protection, and utterly unable to understand Bolingbroke's liberal scheme as anything else than a conspiracy for destroying the trade of the country, and with it the monied class. Petitions poured in against it. Genuine panic joined with the bitterness of the Opposition faction. The committee on the Bill dragged its slow way through petitions and evidence : and at last, on the motion for reporting the Bill to the House, it was lost by a majority of 194 against 185. By nine voices, the Whig party were thus able to defeat the leading feature of Bolingbroke's peace, and to render abortive a scheme of free trade, the first proposed in England, and devised by the bold genius of a Tory Minister.

In these circumstances there was but one who could give the needed help. On the 30th of July, Lewis again presses Swift : "The Lord Treasurer desires you'll make all possible haste over ; for we want you extremely." Swift made excuses and hung

back. He was, perhaps, not unwilling that those who had parted from him so lightly should feel their loss. His reception in Dublin had not indeed been pleasant. He had been hooted in the streets, and libels had been fixed on the door of his own cathedral.¹ He had quickly left the city, and was now spending his time quietly enough, looking after his willows, and riding about the roads near Laracor and Trim in Stella's company; for the "St. Mary's Ladies"² had followed him to Trim, where their cottage was within a couple of miles of his vicarage, and close to the house of Raymond of Trim. He had longed for quiet: but now that he has attained it, he cannot avoid regrets at enforced obscurity: the summons to the wider sphere that he had left was perhaps not unwelcome.

There was, indeed, a new and personal cause of trouble to increase his perplexities and uneasiness. When he left London, he had found for the first time that a friendship begun with no other thought than that of kindly interest, had deepened into something far more serious. We have seen how his acquaintance with the Vanhomrigh family had ripened into intimacy, and how in the mind of Mistress Long,³ at least, there had been some perception of its dangers.

¹ This seems the best-supported story: but Delany (*Observations*, p. 87) throws doubt on it: and possibly the adverse reception to which Deane Swift, in his *Essay* (p. 183) refers, may apply only to the time when Swift came back, the representative of a fallen Ministry.

² He gives this name to Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, because in Dublin they lodged opposite St. Mary's Church, on the north side of the Liffey.

³ See Chap. IX. p. 292.

Esther Johnson may have had her doubts even thus early. So long before as March, 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{2}{1}$, she had hinted surprise at his friendship with the Vanhomrighs, as people of no consequence: and Swift had playfully stood up for them, as keeping company equal to his own. So early as July, 1710, "Miss Essy," as she was familiarly called by him, had written to Swift: and she wrote to him again in the next spring.¹ Since then the intimacy had increased. She had sought his guidance and help in her reading: he, on the other hand, had found in her society a relief from weightier cares. A language of familiar banter was used by Swift, perhaps with the purpose of leading her mind away from any graver thoughts: a language light and playful, but very different from that "little language," as they were wont to call it, that knit together the past memories of Stella and of Swift. With that lifelong bond, this new friendship never, even remotely, interfered. So little truth is there in the idea, first started by Sheridan, and from him rashly adopted by Scott, that professes to fix a date early in this year when the feeling for Vanessa made all expressions of warmth and endearment in the *Journal* give place to cold and business-like formality. But just as he started from London, Swift had found that Vanessa's feeling was something stronger than common friendship. He had written a short and kindly letter of adieu from St. Albans: and from Dunstable he wrote to the mother to tell of his progress, and to convey a

¹ These two letters are known to have been received only by the entries in Swift's note-books, now in South Kensington Museum.

few words of banter to both her daughters alike. But the replies from Vanessa, following quickly one upon another, became stronger and more impassioned. Every letter from him is prized : her whole anxiety is about his health. "I believe," she says, "you little thought to have been teased by me so soon . . . but I had not self-denial enough to forbear." The mark, she says, is still in the book they were reading, where he left it. She wants to know about his new horse, Bolingbroke. She suffers tortures of anxiety till she can hear whether the pain in his head is better. Her passion already makes her letters broken and inconsistent.

"If I talk," she says, "impertinently, I know you have goodness enough to forgive me, when you consider how great an ease 'tis to me to ask these questions. . . . Oh, what would I give to know how you do at this instant ! My fortune is too hard, your absence was enough without this cruel addition. Sure the powers above are envious of your thinking so well which makes them at times strive to interrupt you."

"If you think I write too often," she says again, "your only way is to tell me so, or at least to write to me again that I may know you don't quite forget me." Then follows the first word of what was perhaps the real secret of her uneasiness, in the thought that another's love was dearer to Swift than her own. "If you are very happy, it is ill-natured of you not to tell me so, except 'tis *what is inconsistent with my own.*" For his behoof she has gathered what political news she could : she tells him of her reading : she links it somehow with their friendship : she strives to

flatter him by describing how dire is the Ministry's need of his help.

Clearly the passion he had kindled was no matter for laughter, or for sport. With all his knowledge of human nature, Swift scarcely fathomed the depths of a woman's heart: and the very tenderness of sensitivity that underlay his rough coating of cynicism, tempted him to avoid any harsh or too decided step to crush out the flame he had kindled. He writes quietly, but not unkindly. He has, he tells her,¹ quitted Dublin, where he found but few friends. He has hidden himself down at Laracor, preferring "a field bed and an earthen floor before the great house there which they say is mine." "I told you," he goes on, "when I left England, I would endeavour to forget everything there, and would write as seldom as I could." He is not coming over till he is sent for: but he does not conceal from Vanessa the dreariness of his new life: perhaps, indeed, he sought rather to impress it on her mind.

"At my first coming," he says, "I thought I should have died with discontent, and was horribly melancholy while they were installing me: but it begins to wear off, and change to dulness. My river walk is extremely pretty and my canal in great beauty, and I see trout playing in it. . . . I am now fitter to look after willows and to cut hedges, than to meddle with affairs of State. I must order one of the workmen to drive those cows out of my island, and make up the ditch again; a work much more proper for a country vicar than driving out factions, and fencing against them."

Swift might well fancy that nothing was so likely

¹ Letter of 8th July.

as this to drive from Vanessa's heart what he thought was but a passing folly. To paint the hardships of his life as in strong contrast with the ease of her life in London, and with those cosy evenings that he speaks of when they drank coffee in "the sluttery"; to show her his humdrum occupations, so different from those that attracted her vanity when she felt herself the companion of one who guided Ministers, and shaped treaties, and struck terror into his foes,—these were the methods by which Swift hoped to cure poor Vanessa of her foolish love. The plan succeeded no better than any one of the schemes for curing passion which those who do not enter into its intensity are so ready to attempt.

The dulness with which Swift tried to frighten Vanessa, really weighed heavily on him. The thought that he was dismissed as a discarded tool, gnawed him at the heart. He would fain have given up all thoughts of courts and courtiers, but the habit was too strong on him to let him rest at ease. He had deceived himself if he thought he had learned thoroughly the emptiness of what they had to offer him. Here and there, the restlessness breaks out. Writing to Atterbury, just appointed Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster, he feels that to that fiery spirit he can speak out his mind, and he assures him

"*Hæ latebræ nec dulces nec, si mihi credis, amœnæ.*"

Laracor was not the quiet and peaceful retreat that it had seemed to him, when jaded by the frets of

politics: and Dublin was worse still. There "they were all party mad." "It is one felicity," Swift goes on, "of being among willows that one is not troubled with faction." In Dublin his friends were few, and of the old ones some had drifted away. We shall see, further on, something of the circle that he formed when his banishment was final: but now some three or four comprise all his friends. Sir Constantine Phipps, the Lord Chancellor, now under the cloud of a threatened attack by the House of Commons for his supposed leanings to Jacobitism: Judge Nutley, pressed on his acquaintance by Prior, who, nevertheless, doubts whether Nutley's gravity would not lose him Swift's esteem: Worrall, who was living within the liberty of St. Patrick's, and whose friendship dated from nearly twenty-five years back: and Archdeacon Walls, the Dean's business factotum—these well-nigh completed the list. Walls soon asked Swift to stand godfather to a little daughter: and in spite of his doubts as to the opportuneness of the new arrival, Swift, on the 7th of August, gives assent:

"I received your notification relating to one Dorothy (Mrs. Walls) and her new productions, which like other second parts are seldom so good as the first. I shall be in town, I hope, by the time appointed, and contribute as far towards making your new inhabitant a Christian as one of that sex can be."¹

There is more in the same mood, proving that the dulness was not perpetual: and some domestic mishap, bewailed by Walls, serves to stir Swift to a joke. "Your melancholy story of the cask is not new to me.

¹ *Swift to Walls* (Mr. Murray's MSS.)

I have known it very frequent to have empty wooden vessels stufft with books."

But, with the scent of battle in the air, he is not displeased when the summons to return becomes too peremptory to be disregarded. He is glad to get away from Ireland, although when once he feels himself again in England, the sense of hopelessness returns. On the 31st of August he sets out: and on the 17th of September he thus writes from London to Walls, when on the eve of renewing the life of "sturt and strife," behind which those private cares, that are at once the perplexity and the interest of Swift's biography, are so often forced to disappear.

"Our St. Mary's friends, I suppose, have told you I got well here. It is an empty town, and I believe I shall go to Windsor for some time. I protest I am less fond of England than ever. The ladies tell me they are going to live at Trim, I hope they will pass their Christmas at Dublin. Our club is strangely broke; the Bishop at Dromore, I here, and none but you and Stoytes left. Our goody Walls, my gossip, will die of the spleen. Pray write to me when you have leisure. I care not five-pence for your Dublin news, but of our friends, and of my own affairs: and give my serviee to Mr. Commissioner Forbes. You will have the Duke of Shrewsbury¹ soon over with you; and Sir John Stanley² his secretary; I have not yet seen the Duke

¹ The Duke was appointed Lord-Lieutenant.

² Sir John Stanley was the uncle of Miss Mary Granville, afterwards Mrs. Pendarves, and finally Mrs. Delany. It was to his house that she and her sister were carried on the night so graphically described by her, when her father was arrested in 1714: and by Sir John she was in great measure brought up. Swift, in two of his later Irish papers, recalls a saying of Stanley's, the truth of which seems to have struck him much: that in the matter of laying on taxes, the House of Commons was generally misled by an erroneous supposition that two and two make four, whereas they only make one. A tax when doubled, he means to say, often

nor the Duchess ; for they are at Windsor with the Court. My service to the alderman and goody and Catharine, and Mr. Manly and lady : I think I know no others. Enelose your letters to me under a cover, which cover you must direct to Erasmus Lewis, Esq., at Mr. Seeretary Bromley's office at Whitehall. My service to Parnell. I have lazily deferred this letter till the post is going. Pray God bless my little god-daughter. I hope to breed her up to be good for something, if her mother will let me."

In a letter to Walls from Windsor, only a fortnight later, he speaks of a proposal to make him Prolocutor of Convocation, in which he is not unwilling to acquiesce.¹

"I will confess to you, there are two reasons why I should comply with it ; one is, that I am heartily weary of Courts and Ministers, and politics, for several reasons impossible to tell you : and I have a mind to be at home, since the Queen has been pleased that Ireland should be my home. The other reason is, that I think somebody educated in Ireland should be Prolocutor ; and I hear there are designs of turning it another way. But, if you find it will not do, I hope you will quit the design in proper season."

He had hoped that, at last, what he felt to be the ingratitude of the Irish Church for the work he had done, might be wiped away, and that without the countenance of the Episcopal bench he might be chosen as representing the Lower Clergy. But he writes again and again to Walls, urging him not to press the matter unduly. For his own part, he does

yields only one-half of that which it brought in before it was increased. See Scott's edition of the works, vol. vii. pp. 170, 258.

¹ *Swift to Archdeacon Walls*, Oct. 1, 1713 (Mr. Murray's MSS.)

not wish the post, save as "an honest excuse to leave Courts and public thoughts." He "will not hawk for an appointment he nowise seeks to desire, and then fail of it."¹ He thought he was secure of Archbishop King's help: but once again he finds the Archbishop a fickle friend, and Lord Chancellor Phipps tells him what difficulties he may have to encounter there.²

"I cannot discharge the part of a friend, if I omit to let you know that your great neighbour at St. Pulcher's is very angry with you. He accuses you for going away without taking your leave of him, and intends in a little time to compel you to reside at your deanery. He lays some other things to your charge, which you shall know in a little time."

Such threats as these were little likely to reconcile Swift to his Irish post. His anger became stronger when Walls wrote to him that he must come over, and work for his election to the Prolocutorship. Swift replies thus:³—

"I have had two letters from you very lately. The last, of the 19th instant, came yesterday. As for those you sent me about the Prolocutorship, I reckon them for nothing. I would see you all whipt before I would venture myself in any manner to come over upon a fool's errand: and for what? for a place I would rather be without, neither would I take it upon any score but being chosen freely by a vast majority, which would let the world see they thought me a man fit to serve the Church. And since they have not chosen me, they show they do not think me such a man, and consequently they and I do not deserve each other."

Swift had, indeed, found enough to busy him

¹ *Swift to Walls*, October 20.

² *Phipps to Swift*, October 24.

³ *Swift to Walls*, November 26, 1713 (Mr. Murray's MSS.)

without troubling himself over Irish prolocutorships. He had reached England on the eve of the election of a new Parliament. The constituencies were about to pronounce their opinion on the peace and on the Commercial Treaty. The Whigs professed themselves to be striving for the honour of England, for the safety of the Protestant succession, for the well-being of English manufactures. The Tories put in the front of their appeal the boon of peace which they had secured, the benefit of cheaper commodities which their Commercial Treaty offered, and loyalty to Church and Crown, which they defended, but which new-fangled notions were undermining. All seemed to point to the success of the Whigs. The victories, to which Marlborough had accustomed the people, were missed. The merchants had been roused to ardent political partizanship, by self-interest. The fears of Pope and Pretender were vividly presented to the mob. The disastrous betrayal of our interests to France was heightened by all the exaggeration that partizanship could stimulate. The Whig supporters wore locks of wool in their hats to show the British industry that was threatened by the unheard-of laxity of Bolingbroke's commercial scheme. They burned in company the effigies of Pope, Devil, and Pretender. On the other hand the Tories could only appeal to the unobtrusive benefits of peace and the abstractions of passive obedience. To typify their creed they wore branches of the oak leaves, that had sheltered the fugitive king. Steele was urging in the *Guardian* the double dealing of the French in the

matter of the Dunkirk fortifications: and he was feebly answered by feeble hands in the *Examiner*.¹ A *Short History of the Last Parliament* from the pen of Walpole, far as it falls below the trenchant simplicity of Swift's style, was still strikingly effective. In a mock dedication to the Lord —, by whom he means to indicate Lord Oxford, he gives him lavish ironical praise as a true, thorough, and successful friend to France, whose labours had undone the ill-work of Marlborough in curbing the ambition of the French king. He shows in the clearest light the ludicrous inconsistency of that Parliament, by turns favouring the war, and then, in answer to the call of the Ministry, succumbing to the peace proposals. What motives were at work? What motives could have acted, but bribery and selfish greed? The allotment of places, the disbursement of secret service money, the shameless bribery, are all touched on by the masterly hand of one who was already qualifying for the place of adept in Parliamentary corruption. If the majority were ever by chance independent, even the fact that they were so, is turned to their disgrace: it is but a sign of the flimsiness of their conviction, which allowed them these freaks of momentary liberty.

Swift had not come at all too soon. A month before Lord Oxford had been apparently in the full tide of success. Then it seemed as if the only object of any one who would learn politics was to unravel

¹ After Swift quitted the *Examiner*, it was kept up for a time by Mrs. Manley, and others whom she could get to assist her.

the enigma of his mind. Men had not yet discovered that the seeming mystery covered little but incapacity. But already the seeds of failure were laid. The extreme Tories suspected and hated Harley's moderation. Bolingbroke was growing bolder in his pronounced enmity. Ill health was pressing on the Lord Treasurer, and confirming him in that vice of drunkenness which was hereditary in his family. Before the close of November, Swift, whose fidelity to him never varied, had to console him as well as might be under crushing bereavement—the death of his eldest and favourite daughter, the Marchioness of Caermarthen.¹ “I could hardly think of anything,” says Swift to Walls, “having just lost a friend I extremely loved, the poor Marchioness of Caermarthen. She was but 24 years old, a most excellent person, adorned with all possible good qualities. She was Lord Treasurer's eldest daughter and his favourite. He is in great affliction: and so are five hundred others.”

The seeds of decay were there, and Swift was fully alive to its dangers. It could be no matter for surprise to him that, after the blows he had aimed at the Whigs, he should now be singled out for attack. He was pointed out by those who followed Steele's insinuations, as the writer of the *Examiner*: and this, false as it was, became the text for Abel Boyer's *Political State*, for November, 1713. Swift's relations with Harley, the reward of the deanery, his supposed infidelity, the Jacobitical leanings ascribed to him,

¹ *Swift to Walls*, Nov. 26, 1713 (Mr. Murray's MSS.)

were all made the subject of Boyer's laboured invective; and the libel was pointed by the full quotation of Swift's own burlesque imitation of the seventh of Horace's *First Book of Epistles*, in which he had just described his own introduction to the Lord Treasurer, and their subsequent dealings, with a freedom and a want of reticence, that almost served as baits to the lampooner. He gave his enemies the very handle they wanted, when he spoke of himself thus:—

“ A clergyman of special note
 In shunning those of his own coat :
 Which made his brethren of the gown
 Take care betimes to run him down :
 No libertine, *nor over nice*,
 Addicted to no sort of vice :
 Went where he pleased, said what he thought,
 Not rich, but owed no man a groat :
 In State opinions *à la mode*,
 He hated Wharton like a toad :
 Had given the faction many a wound,
 And libelled all the Junta round.”

One cloud that threatened his friends was the illness of the Queen. “We are here,” says Swift,¹ “in odd circumstances. Few of the Whigs will allow the Queen to be alive, or, at best, that she can live a month.” The illness passed, but it left an impression of danger on the Ministry. The close of that life would open questions of exceeding difficulty, which were scarcely likely to be settled by a Ministry in which the essential weakness of division had appeared. The elections, no doubt, contrary to all expectation, had gone adversely to the Whigs, and the Ministers

¹ *Swift to Walls*, Feb. 2, 1714 (Mr. Murray's MSS.)

found themselves with a large majority. But even with this the meeting of Parliament was deferred, as it would seem, from the timidity or hesitation of the Ministers.

The chief topic of discussion for the Opposition while awaiting the opening of Parliament was the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht. Bad as this Treaty was, the Whigs averred that even its poor conditions were still unfulfilled. Dunkirk's fortifications were still intact : and it was feared that the Ministers were inclined to relax the requirement for their destruction out of deference to the desires of France. Steele, now in the full blush of his honours as the new member of Parliament for Stockbridge, had been bestirring himself in the discussion, and partly from political ambition, partly in hope of a little gain, had written a pamphlet on the *Importance of Dunkirk*. Swift now found the opportunity of revenge for which he longed, in writing an answer with the title of *The Importance of the Guardian*, cast in his most scathing style of sarcasm. This appeared in December, 1713. Steele followed up his first effort by producing, on the 19th of January, *The Crisis*, which was intended to arouse the nation to the dangers now threatening the principles of the Revolution. It was ponderous, ill-conceived, and unreadable : reproducing at full length the tedious detail of the Acts of Settlement. But such as it was, the Whigs caught it up eagerly : and Steele's vanity prompted him to a new effort in the *Englishman*, where he went further afield, and interfered even with Irish politics.

He was answered in a style of the fiercest scorn by Swift : and this answer—*The Public Spirit of the Whigs*—which appeared in March, remains as the solitary monument, towering high above all the passing incidents of the fray.

Meanwhile, on the 16th of February, Parliament had at length met. The Queen's health was hazardous : the stocks were falling : the Ministry knew their position to be threatened. Country gentlemen, beyond the limits of the Whig party, began to have suspicions of Jacobite designs. Ireland was intractable, and seemed indisposed to accept ministerial guidance. Disunion was now so serious, that Oxford and Bolingbroke hardly kept up a semblance of civility to one another. Extreme Tories dreaded lest the moderate men, whom they called the "Whimsicals," would coalesce with the Whigs : moderate men feared lest the extreme Tories should make terms with the Pretender. When Parliament opened, its first act was a slight on the Ministry. Sir Thomas Hanmer, a Tory, but a Tory separated from the Ministry, was elected as Speaker instead of William Bromley, one of the members for Oxford University : and his election was viewed as a sort of triumph for the Whigs. Steele, with his usual and characteristic tactlessness, kindled into fury the ill-will that was already slumbering against him for *The Crisis*. He not only rose to make his maiden speech on the first day of the session, and on a subject usually treated in accordance with the strictest notions of Parliamentary etiquette : but with a reminiscence of a

Latin idiom, unknown to nine-tenths of his hearers,¹ he described himself as “rising to do honour to Sir Thomas Hanmer.”

The first weeks of the session were spent largely in attacks by the Commons on Steele, and by the Lords on Swift. Swift, in his pamphlet, by some contemptuous language, possibly by an over-candid utterance of some home-truths, had mortally offended the Scottish representatives. He decried the Union as an unmitigated evil for England, rendered necessary only by the ill-management of Lord Godolphin. At most it saved only a year or two of campaigning, which would have been all that the reduction of the Scots could have required. Proud, poor, turbulent, and shifty, the Scottish representatives were only too ready to find some means of making themselves troublesome. With the Duke of Argyll at their head, they now went in a body to petition the Crown for redress. The Lord Treasurer, unwilling to alienate the northern Lords, had recourse to the sure refuge of vacillation and weakness—evasion and untruth. He issued a Proclamation offering £300 reward for information as to the author, of whom he declared that he knew nothing: and at the same time, when Morpew and Barber, the publisher and printer, were summoned to account for their share in the production, he secretly sent £100 to Swift to reimburse these understrappers for their loss and trouble. The thought was not an unkindly one: but the imposture is all the more strange, as he can

¹ *Assurgere alicui.*

scarcely have hoped to persuade any one that he was not actually privy to the Tract.

The fury of the Scotch champions passed lightly over the head of Swift. But it was otherwise with his opponent Steele. His arrogance, his folly, the cool effrontery of his maiden speech, angered even his own party, and rendered their defence lukewarm. The House of Commons had more effectual means of sating their vengeance than was possessed by a clique of impoverished Scotch nobles. *The Crisis* was condemned: and, by a curious freak of parliamentary virulence, the member for Stockbridge was stripped of his blushing honours, and expelled from Parliament.¹

Swift was not likely to slacken his effort because of attacks and suspicions from without. But dissension within sickened and disheartened him. Freely as his labours had been given, he now only longed for an end of them. "I am now," he writes to Walls,² "under a great load of uneasy business which I hope to get over." Amid the struggle, his most congenial interest lay in the planning of new literary schemes, and in drawing more close the ties that bound him to Arbuthnot and Pope and Gay. These years of hot political strife, much as they had absorbed Swift in the exciting whirl of affairs, had

¹ It may be convenient in this connexion to deal with what seems to be an incident of the Swift and Steele quarrel, viz. the *Character of Steele*, which was afterwards republished as the work of Wagstaffe. See *Note* at the end of this chapter for a discussion of this point.

² *Swift to Walls*, March 6, 1714 $\frac{4}{5}$ (Mr. Murray's MSS.)

been blanks as regards all permanent literary work. Now, as the struggle was growing hopeless, and as its end appeared to be near, the schemes in which he was linked with these more sympathetic comrades, regained their place. The chief was the plan conceived by the Scriblerus Club, devoted to prolong "the memory of that learned phantom which is to be immortal,"¹ Martinus Scriblerus. Swift, Gay, Pope, and Arbuthnot formed the Club: Parnell soon joined them: and Oxford and Bolingbroke shared in their designs. They met at the rooms in St. James's Palace which Arbuthnot held as Court Physician, and there planned a treatise which was to hold up to ridicule the absurdities of pedantic learning in all its forms. Arbuthnot was the centre of the group, and the name of Martin himself was sometimes applied to, and accepted by, him. The first fragments which actually appeared owed much to his hand. The memoirs of the half-crazed pedant, after the Don Quixote type, who was to be the hero of the whole, were begun by him. But the other friends, too, were full of the plan. Pope was "returning from Troy."² Gay was idly looking about for employment. Swift was ready to beguile by literature his political disgust. Bolingbroke was proud to air his versatility: and Lord Oxford's stolid phlegm let him find amusement in the jingling couplets which were the tinsel part of the design,

¹ The phrase occurs in a letter from Pope to Arbuthnot, 2d Sept., 1714.

² "The season of the Campaign before Troy, is near over," so Pope himself says in a letter written at this time to Arbuthnot.

and in which he was pleased to show his own facility.¹ Swift mistook the stolidity for fortitude, and was glad to invite his chief to throw off cares which he fancied might be pressing him too hard.

But the storm was at hand. Disaster soon broke up the coterie and shattered their designs. A few fragments indeed appeared, from the pens of Arbuthnot and Pope and Gay, with perhaps some help from Swift. But the Scriblerus Club is chiefly of interest in the life of Swift, not as it made him contribute to the joint production, but as it gives a new turn to his thoughts at so critical a moment. The literary monuments of Scriblerus are not to be found in anything that proceeded directly from this ineffective partnership of wit, but in the isolated efforts of the two greatest of the group—in *Gulliver's Travels* and the *Dunciad*.

The dangers were rapidly taking definite shape. Swift more than any other might, it had been hoped, appease the fatal disputes: but even he had failed. His patience was worn out: and in May he announced his intention of retiring and leaving the Ministry to their fate. He was still pressed to stay: for, as one of those who looked for his help² alleged in excuse of his importunity, "You have an unlucky quality that exposes you to the folly of those who love you: I mean *good nature*." The wrongs Swift has suffered,

¹ "He used," Pope said to Spence, "to send trifling verses from the Court to the Scriblerus Club almost every day, and come and talk idly every night, when his all was at stake."

² Chiverton Charlton, Yeoman of the Guard, writing to Swift on the 22nd of May.

this correspondent admits: but "choose," he says, "to stay and convince the world that you are as much above private resentment when the public is concerned, as you are incapable of being tired out in the service of your country: and that you are neither afraid nor unwilling to face a storm in a good cause."

But at the end of May, Swift left. He buried himself at Letcombe in Berkshire, in the house of his friend Mr. Gery, the vicar, whose unassuming worth had attracted Swift, even though he had been guilty of what Swift held to be the signal folly of marriage, and had been unwise enough to ask Swift's advice about that marriage only when it was too late to break it off.¹ One Molly Gery, Swift had known as far back as his Farnham days, and it was probably this old friendship for the family that now decided the choice of his place of retirement.

No contrast with the life he had just quitted, could have been greater than this. He sought it only in despair. He had striven long and faithfully, but now he could do no more. He refused to witness longer the ruin of the cause he had at heart by blindness, vacillation, and wretched jealousies. His absence was soon felt. Others attempted to take up his work: but they could not fill his place. "You have formed a new character," says the Lord Treasurer's own cousin, "which no one is vain enough to pretend to imitate."²

¹ *Journal* for May, 1712.

² *Thomas Harley to Swift*, June 19, 1714.

Swift stayed at Letcombe for just two months and a half, before he left for Ireland. These were eventful weeks for the country; and they formed a curiously critical passage in Swift's life. To understand much that is strange in his later years, we must attend carefully to his mood now: and every scrap of evidence that throws light upon that mood is of interest.

On the 11th^{*} of June, he writes thus to Walls:¹—

“I think it is long since I wrote to you, or you to me. I am now retired into the country, weary to death of Courts and Ministers and business and politics. I hope to be in Ireland, if possible, by the end of the summer; sooner I cannot, having many papers to look over and settle while I am here. I was six weeks compassing the great work of leaving London, and did it at last abruptly enough: but go I would: the reasons I may live to tell you, or perhaps you will guess them by their effects before I see you. I shall say no more, but that I care not to live in storms, when I can no longer do service in the ship, and am able to get out of it. I have gone through my share of malice and danger, and will be as quiet the rest of my days as I can. So much for politics.”

Then he breaks off, to deal with endless details about the business arrangements which he trusted to Walls. In a more amusing and more confidential strain, he writes to Arbuthnot:²

“My stomach is prouder than you imagine, and I scorned to write till I was writ to. I have already half lost the idea of Courts and Ministers. I dine between 12 and 1, and the whole house is a-bed by 10, and up at 6. I drink no wine and

¹ *Swift to Walls*, June 11, 1714 (Mr. Murray's MSS.)

² *Swift to Arbuthnot*, June 16, 1714. Printed by Mr. Cunningham, in his edition of *Lives of the Poets* (1854), vol. iii. p. 203.

see but one dish of meat. I pay a guinea a week for dieting and lodging myself and man with an honest clergyman of my old acquaintance, and my paying is forced, for he has long invited me. I did not know till last night that the Princess Sophia was dead¹ when my landlord and I chanced to pay a visit to a farmer in a neighbouring village, and was told so over a mug of ale, by a brisk young fellow, just come from London, who talked big and looked on us with great contempt. . . . The fashion of this world passeth away: however I am angry at those who disperse us sooner than these may need. I have a mind to be very angry, and to let my anger break out in some manner that will not please them at the end of a pen.² . . . You are a set of people drawn almost to the dregs: you must try another game: this is at an end. Your Ministry is fourscore and ten years old, and all you can endeavour at is an Euthanasia, or rather it is in a deep consumption at five-and-twenty. . . . Writing to you much would make me stark mad. Judge his condition who has nothing to keep him from being miserable but endeavouring to forget those for whom he has the greatest value, love, and friendship. But you are a Philosopher and a Physician, and can overcome by your wisdom and your faculty those weaknesses which other men are forced to reduce by not thinking on them. Adieu, and love me half so well as I do you."

Swift was perhaps helped to the oblivion he desired by planning for Scriblerus. Pope tells him that Arbuthnot was ascribing his retirement entirely to zeal for the scheme: that his "only design is to attend at full leisure to the life and adventures of Scriblerus." And Arbuthnot himself,³ after hinting at some of the growing troubles, and telling how

¹ The Electress died on the 28th of May.

² This refers to the *Free Thoughts on the Present State of Affairs*, which was written just now, but by Bolingbroke's intervention was delayed so long, that it was allowed to stand over till later years.

³ *Arbuthnot to Swift*, June 26, 1714.

"the Dragon¹ dies hard," turns also to Scriblerus. "Pray remember Martin," he says, "who is an innocent fellow, and will not disturb your solitude. The ridicule of medicine is so copious a subject, that I must only here and there touch it." Then he gives a sketch of his own and Pope's plans for fulfilling the common design, adding, "I do not give you these hints to divert you, but that you may have your thoughts and work upon them." Swift replied in the following letter, now first printed, which paints for us, with great clearness of outline, both Swift's relations to his literary fellow-workers, and his outlook on political affairs:²—

"July 3rd, 1714.

"I reckoned you would have held up for one letter, and so have given over. That is the usual way I treat my best absent friends when I am in London. Did I describe myself as in a happy state here? Upon my faith you read wrong; I have no happiness but being so far out of the way of the Dragon and the rest. Lewis reproaches me as one who has still an itch to the Court only because I asked him how the *Summa rerum* went: was not that unjust? and quotes upon me *Quae lucis miscris tam dira cupido?* I do assert that living near a Court with some circumstances is a most happy life, and would be so still if the Dragon did not spoil it. I find the triumvirate of honest councillors is at an end. I am gone; Lewis says he lives in ignorance in his castle, and you meddle as little as you can: one thing still lies upon you, which is to be a constant adviser to Lady M(asham). The game will of course be played into her hand. She has very good sense but may be imposed upon. And I heard a whisper that the Squire³ plies there again. 'Tis, as you say, if the Dragon speaks kindly of Parnell he is gone.

¹ The Dragon was the familiar name for Oxford.

² *Swift to Arbuthnot* (MS. letter in the Forster collection).

³ The familiar name for Bolingbroke.

'Tis the Ossories that get the Derryes and the Chesters the Yorks.¹

"To talk of Martin in any hands but yours is a folly. You every day give better hints than all of us together could do in a twelvemonth: and, to say the truth, Pope, who first thought of the hint, has no genius at all to it in my mind. Gay is too young; Parnell has some ideas of it, but is idle: I could put together and lard and strike out well enough, but all that relates to the sciences must be from you. I am a vexed unsettled vagabond, and my thoughts are turned towards some papers I have, and some other things I would fain get from you and Lady M(asham), and would have had from the Dragon but that is impossible till he is out, and then I will go to him to Herefordshire and make him give me hints. I have got my History² from Secretary Bromley; and they shall never have it again, and it shall be an altered thing if I live.

"The hints you mention relating to medicine are admirable. I wonder how you can have a mind so *déagé* in a Court where there are so many million of things to vex you. You must understand I have writt this post to the Dragon, but you must not take notice of it nor I fancy will he, for what I writt is very odd and serious. I think to go and ramble for a month about Herefordshire and those parts. Ask the Dragon whether he will order his people at his castle to receive me. Why do you not send your Parliament agrazing? What do you mean by your Proclamation and £5000?³ Till I hear reasons I dislike your Politics. Why do I talk of it say you? Why did that puppy Barber write of it to me? But the Commons offer £100,000. If I was the Pretender I would come over myself and take the money to help to pay my troops. They had better put out a Proclamation that whoever discovers the Pretender or the longitude shall have £100,000.⁴ This strain

¹ Dr. Hartstong, Bishop of Ossory, had just been translated to Derry: and Sir William Dawes from Chester to York.

² The History of the Peace of Utrecht. It never appeared.

³ The proclamation offering a reward of £5000 for the Pretender, dead or alive, was issued, after the death of the Electress, to appease the alarms of a Jacobite invasion.

⁴ If anything were needed to prove the absolute ignorance on Swift's part of any Jacobite designs, this sentence would supply it.

is a sacrifice to Hanover, the Whigs, and the Qu(een's) state of health. It will neither satisfy Hanover, silence the Whigs, nor cure the gout. Give him a pension and oblige him to live beyond the Alps. What's become of your project to make it high treason to bring over foreign troops? I wish a little care was taken for securing the kingdom as well as the succession.¹ But country Politics are doubly insupportable, and so I have done and retire to lament with my neighbours the want of rain and dearness of hay. Farmer Tyler says the white mead at Chawdry has not been so bad in the memory of man, and the summer barley is quite dried up, but we hope to have a pretty good crop of wheat. Parson, 'tis thought, must stick to his bargain, but all the neighbours say the Attorney was an arrant rogue. We cannot get a bit of good butter for love or money. I could tell you more of the state of our affairs, but doubt your taste is not refined enough for it."

The irony which appears in the closing lines here has marks peculiar to his later humour, and the picture which he gives of his life throughout these letters, bears out that which Pope gives to Arbuthnot in the form of a mock news letter, on the 4th of July.²

"This day the envoys deputed to Dean Swift on the part of his late confederates, arrived here during the time of divine service. They were received at the back door, and having paid the usual compliments on their part, and received the usual chidings on that of the Dean, were introduced to his landlady, and entertained with a pint of the Lord Bolingbroke's Florence. The health of that great Minister was drank in this pint, together with the Lord Treasurer's, whose wine we also wished for; after which were commemorated Dr. Arbuthnot, and Mr. Lewis, in a sort of cider, plentiful in these parts, and not altogether unknown in the taverns of London. There was likewise a sideboard of coffee, which the Dean roasted with his

¹ This was the extent of Swift's Jacobitism: that is to say, he was strongly in favour of the Revolution Settlement, but refused to accept it as the be-all and end-all of politics.

² Printed in Mr. Elwin's edition of Pope (*Letters*, ii. 468).

own hands in an engine for the purpose, his landlady attending all the while that office was performing. He talked of politics over coffee, with the air and style of an old statesman, who had known something formerly, but was shamefully ignorant of the last three weeks. When we mentioned the welfare of England, he laughed at us, and said Muscovy would become a flourishing empire very shortly. He seems to have wrong notions of the British Court, but gave us a hint as if he had a correspondence with the King of Sweden. As for the methods of passing his time, I must tell you one which constantly employs an hour about noon. He has in his windows an orbicular glass, which by contraction of the solar beams into a proper focus, doth burn, singe, or speckle, white, or printed paper, in curious little holes, or various figures. We chanced to find some experiments of this nature upon the votes of the House of Commons. The name of Thomas Haumer, Speaker, was much singed, and that of John Barber entirely burnt out. There was a large gap at the edge of the Bill of Schism, and several specks upon the Proclamation for the Pretender. I doubt not but these marks of his are mystical, and that the figures he makes this way are a significant cypher to those who have the skill to explain them."

Swift's own letters, as well as the laboured artificiality of Pope's description, lead us to the same conclusion as to his mood during these weeks. By his former associates he was kept fully informed as to the "chaos of affairs" which now prevailed. The rapidly approaching fall of Oxford, the tricks of Lady Masham, the growth of Bolingbroke's influence, were all chronicled for him. Swift, in his retirement, received them as from a world to which he no longer belonged. His friends were still pressing, on his behalf, his appointment as historiographer, for which he had asked in a memorial drawn up three months before. But all direct interest in politics he had,

as he fancied, laid aside for ever. He had before spoken with anger and vexation of the toil and worry that his political work had caused him : but he had never spoken of politics with the apathetic cynicism that he now assumed. Though he would not allow himself to disown them in failure, he was nevertheless disgusted with his friends : it may be, that he was in some sort disgusted with himself, and with his ill-spent labour. When his money affairs in Ireland go wrong, through the carelessness and dishonesty of Parvisol his agent, he seems to let loose an amount of pent-up indignation that covered perhaps more than Parvisol's wrong-doing.

"Such a raseal,"¹ he says, "deserves nothing more than rigorous justiee. He has imposed upon my easiness, and that is what I never will forgive. I beg you will not do the least thing in regard to him, but merely for my interest, as if I were a Jew, and let who will censure me. . . . His vanity, pride, and carelessness, are ruining me when I am laden with debts, and the Court will not give me a penny to pay them. I am above £150 in debt in London since I came. . . . I am weary of Ministers : I stole from them all, and have here a little quiet. . . . Do as you please, but let no regard to him influence you. I will take all the blame of hardship on myself : lay it on me as strong as you please."

The indignation, the cynicism, and the apathy, were indeed the signs of a mind ill-at-ease with itself. He cannot shake off the longing to be back, even though the favourable circumstances, which, as he said to Arbuthnot, might make living near a Court a most happy life, were wholly gone. He would fain

¹ *Swift to Walls*, July 3, 1714 (Mr. Murray's MSS.)

have seen his lot cast amongst the friends who were so much to him : but he saw that the hope of a settlement in England was vanishing. He had, for nearly four years, turned from the literary work in which he was unrivalled, and had narrowed himself to party : and now he dreaded lest his power was gone. "I could put together and lard and strike out," as he says to Arbuthnot, "but I am a poor unsettled vagabond." To wean himself from the past ; to strike out a new line ; to allow his sarcasm to shake itself free from casual environments, and to recover its broader and more permanent tone,—this was now to be the work of Swift : and it began during these few weeks of apparent quiet, but of real struggle and self-discipline.

During Swift's absence the Schism Bill, which was to prevent schoolmasters carrying on their functions unless they had taken the Sacrament according to the rites of the Established Church, was pushed rapidly forward. It was Bolingbroke's Bill : and his object was to show that a vigorous defiance had taken the place of the timid moderation of Oxford. The Bill was finally carried on the third reading in the Lords by eight votes : and it was to come into operation on the 1st of August. Swift did not love the Dissenters : but he might well doubt the expediency of a measure which was to be the sign of his patron's ruin.

On the 8th of June, Oxford addressed a memorial to the Queen, partly intended as a justification of his past action, partly as a means of winning back some of the favour that was fast deserting him. The

paper is itself his chief indictment. It is pusillanimous, cringing, and without real perception of a Minister's duty. He declines responsibility for failure, because he had been overruled. He assumes credit for having concealed defalcations for which his colleagues were to blame. He admits, with almost inconceivable want of pride, that he had despatched Bolingbroke on a mission to France, not for the public good, but that he might gain Bolingbroke's good-will. Swift could have known nothing of the letter: but much as he held himself bound to fidelity, and much as he deceived himself as to the real capacity of Oxford, is it possible that Swift can have silenced all doubts as to the man, who was weak enough to write a letter such as this? Opposed by Mrs. Masham, and disliked by the Queen, Oxford still clung to office. Bolingbroke saw that he must strike at once, and in the last week of July, the Chancellor was summoned to town to carry out the changes. Oxford lost his self-control, and took to womanish scolding and fretful threats. Erasmus Lewis, his faithful guide and adherent, told Swift that in all his vexations, he was chiefly vexed by this pusillanimity on the part of his chief.¹

On the 27th of July the end came. The Lord Treasurer and Bolingbroke had a conference with the Queen, which ended in a scene of angry wrangling. Between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, Oxford was summoned to resign the White Staff. Bolingbroke had triumphed: but the scene of the

¹ *Lewis to Swift*, July 24, 1714.

morning left the poor Queen stunned and done to death. Amidst the hungry claimants, it could not be settled who should have the staff. It was generally agreed that it should be put in commission : but the commissioners were not named. Content with his triumph, Bolingbroke might well pause. And meanwhile, at his house in Golden Square, he entertained Stanhope, Pulteney, Craggs, and Walpole, as if in ostentatious proof that to him the coalition was possible which Oxford had aimed at in vain.

Less than a month before, Swift had written to take, as he thought, leave of Oxford. The letter tells its own story.

“ July 1, 1714.

“ MY LORD,

“ When I was with you, I have said more than once, that I would never allow quality or station made any real difference between men. Being now absent and forgotten, I have changed my mind : you have a thousand people who can pretend they love you, with as much appearance of sincerity as I ; so that, according to common justice, I can have but a thousandth part in return of what I give. And this difference is wholly owing to your station. And the misfortune is still the greater, because I always loved you just so much the worse for your station ; for, in your public capacity, you have often angered me to the heart, but, as a private man, never once. So that, if I only look toward myself, I could wish you a private man to-morrow ; for I have nothing to ask ; at least nothing that you will give, which is the same thing : and then you would see whether I should not with much more willingness attend you in a retirement, whenever you please to give me leave, than ever I did at London or Windsor. From these sentiments, I will never write to you, if I can help it, otherwise than as to a private person, or allow myself to have been obliged to you in any capacity.

“ The memory of one great instance of your candour and justice, I will carry to my grave ; that having been in a manner

domestic with you for almost four years, it was never in the power of any public or concealed enemy, to make you think ill of me, though malice and envy were often employed to that end. If I live, posterity shall know that, and more ; which, though you, and somebody that shall be nameless, seem to value less than I could wish, is all the return I can make you. Will you give me leave to say how I would desire to stand in your memory ? As one, who was truly sensible of the honour you did him, though he was too proud to be vain upon it ; as one, who was neither assuming, officious, nor teasing ; who never willfully misrepresented persons or facts to you, nor consulted his passions when he gave a character ; and lastly, as one, whose indiscretions proceeded altogether from a weak head, and not an ill heart. I will add one thing more, which is the highest compliment I can make, that I never was afraid of offending you, nor am now in any pain for the manner I write to you in. I have said enough ; and, like one at your levee, having made my bow, I shrink back into the crowd.—I am, etc.

“JON. SWIFT.”

It was thus that a striking chapter in Swift's life was closed. On the 25th of July, he wrote a letter to Arbuthnot¹ where politics were scarcely named, and where the prospect of the “Dragon” going was only lightly alluded to. He is chiefly occupied with expressing his friendship for Arbuthnot, and with encouraging him in his work on *Scriblerus*.

“Our talk was of the Dragon's being out, as a thing done : so no more reflection on that neither :—Qu'est ce que l'homme ? And so you will lend me all your money. The mischief is I never borrow money of a friend. You are mightily mistaken : all your honour, generosity, good nature, good sense, wit, and every other praiseworthy quality, will never make me think one jot the better of you. That time is now some years past, and you will never mend in my opinion. But, really, Brother, you

¹ *Swift to Arbuthnot* : printed by Cunningham (*Lives of the Poets*, iii. 204).

have a sort of shuffle in your gait: and now I have said the worst that your most mortal enemy would say of you with truth. . . . Go on for the sake of wit and humour, and cultivate that vein which no man alive possesses but yourself, and which lay like a mine in the earth, which the owner for a long time never knew of."

Swift was thus throwing politics aside in his retreat, when the news of Oxford's fall came to him as an accomplished fact, from neutrals, from enemies, and from Oxford himself. Clearly the fall was complete and final. Swift must himself have seen, as Lewis said to him in a letter, that Oxford's parts were decayed: Swift had every excuse, and every motive, for standing aloof from him in his fall. He had striven long and his own reward had been poor. He was cultivated by Bolingbroke. He had already planned to go to Ireland: as he told Walls,¹ "his trunk, with all his clothes and linen, was sent last week to Chester, and he was in rags." But he did not hesitate one moment in choosing his part, which was to cling to a friendship which had brought him so little, now that it could bring him even less. Oxford asked him to stay with him in Herefordshire, and Swift feels "he could not possibly refuse" the request.² But he knew what it meant. "I shall lose all favour with those now in power by following Lord Oxford in his retreat. I am hitherto very fair with them: but that will be at an end."

But it was not long before the scene shifted again. Bolingbroke's triumph was short-lived. The stormy disputes around her had shaken the poor Queen's

¹ *Swift to Walls*, July 29 (Mr. Murray's MSS.)

² *Ibid.*

health. Vexed, anxious, not knowing whom to trust, she listened, like one dazed, to the altercations raging round her. She told her attendants that "she could not outlive it." On Thursday the 29th of July, fatal symptoms appeared. Shooting pains in her head were not relieved by cupping. She lay in a comatose state: and a message was sent in haste by the Duchess of Ormond, to summon the Ministers, who were sitting at the Cockpit in Whitehall, to Kensington Palace. They sat there in continuous conclave, when the door of the Council Chamber opened and two peers whose position warranted their intrusion, entered the room. They were the Dukes of Somerset and Argyll. At first there was some commotion: but the Duke of Shrewsbury presently rose and thanked them for their presence: business proceeded; and Bolingbroke felt himself checkmated. The Duke of Shrewsbury was chosen to fill the post of Lord Treasurer: the dying Queen's bedside was approached, and with a last effort of the honesty of purpose that gave some brightness to a life otherwise dreary and even ignoble, she prayed him, as she handed to him the staff, to "hold it for the good of her people."

Promptitude and energy now took the place of confusion and delay. The Privy Councillors within reach, Whigs as well as Tories, were summoned to the Board. The hopes of the Jacobites were dashed. The guards were increased: the garrison at the Tower was reinforced: the train bands were called out: and the ships of war were set in order. A

cordial understanding was established between the Treasury and the Bank of England. Bolingbroke, lately so supreme, found himself taken to task for neglect of the national safety, in leaving the seaports unprovided against attack. Communications were opened with the Elector: the heralds were ordered to be in readiness; and the Hanoverian envoy was requested to attend with the Black Box that contained the appointment of a Council of Regency.

Such were the preparations pressed forward during Friday and Saturday. During these days the Queen lay all but unconscious: and on Sunday morning at seven o'clock, she ended the life of ceaseless vexation and anxiety that august position and great power had brought to a homely, narrow, dull, and uneducated woman. Her fifty years had little of brightness in them: and at an age when many have not passed their prime, she was a lonely, worn-out wreck, with husband and children gone, and with no real friend on earth. "Sleep," says Arbuthnot to Swift, "was never more welcome to a weary traveller, than death was to her."

The news reached Swift soon after noon the same day. Bolingbroke's messenger passed through Wantage with the tidings, and a friend sent thence a hurried line to Swift at Letcombe. From Bolingbroke, he received a letter on the 3rd of August, half boastful, half defiant, half desperate. "All is lost but his spirit": "everything is quiet and will continue so": "the Tories seem to resolve not to be crushed": "the Whigs are a pack of Jacobites":—the letter

contains as many inconsistencies as lines. The writer had not settled whether the case was desperate: and if desperate, what was the most picturesque bow with which he could retire from the stage. Lewis, the wary and practised politician, saw that all was lost: "all old schemes, designs, projects and journeys," are broken by the snapping of the Queen's thread of life.

The country went with the new order of things. Oxford was hooted by the same crowd that had cheered him to the echo three years before: and Bolingbroke was greeted with but doubtful applause. On the 4th of August the Duke of Marlborough, who had returned from abroad, entered London, escorted by two hundred noblemen on horseback.

Swift saw more quickly and more clearly than his confederates, that the Whig triumph was complete. The rabble, whose support had amused him, was changed: "Trade and Wool," now took the place of the old cry for "Sacheverell and the Church." With something of the eye of an artist he saw how the favour of the mob could be excited on the side against his own. "If they will retain me on the other side as their counsellor," he says jestingly to Bolingbroke, "I will engage them a majority." But he never loses heart, or hesitates as he did before the blow had fallen. "I have seen a letter from Dean Swift," says Arbuthnot to Pope in September: "he keeps up his noble spirit, and though like a man knocked down, you may behold him still with a stern countenance, and aiming a blow at his adversaries."

Arbuthnot, too, saw that the end was come. Like Swift, he drew from it a lesson of proud and cynical humour. "I have an opportunity," he suggests to Swift,¹ "calmly and philosophically to consider that treasure of vileness and baseness that I always believe to be in the heart of man." He watches the burst of daylight on the wreck: the women cast from intrigue to tears: the schemes that had busied them scattered: their hopes at an end. For himself he had gained little and had little to lose. Such as it is, he is ready to give it up: "I have not seen anything as yet to make me recant a certain inconvenient opinion I have, that one cannot pay too dear for peace of mind." For the rest, "Fuimus Tories": the Argives of Whigs will triumph, and his only regret is that Scriblerus may get morose and dull.

NOTE ON THE WAGSTAFFE VOLUME (p. 360)

One of the most bitter attacks on Steele, was that made in a Pamphlet on the *Character of Richard St—le, Esq., by Toby, Abel's Kinsman*. It was republished, in 1726, in a volume purporting to contain the miscellaneous works of Dr. William Wagstaffe, who had been Physician at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and who had died at Bath, the year before, at the age of 40. The volume begins with an account of Wagstaffe and his family, which seems, in the main, to be founded on fact. But the question remains, by whom were the works, collected in the volume, written? The hypothesis of the late Mr. Dilke, in his republished *Papers of a Critic*, is that they are

¹ *Arbuthnot to Swift*, Aug. 12, 1714.

mainly from the hand of Swift, with a few written by another hand, and inserted in order to mislead. Wagstaffe seems to have been a good-humoured, somewhat careless, wit, whose pen may well have produced some stray pieces, although he never attained to any reputation, and, according to his professed biographer, never acknowledged his authorship. We have no authority for saying that he was a friend of Swift's:¹ but Swift undoubtedly knew some who were Wagstaffe's friends: and the death of the little-known physician, and careless wit, may have given Swift the opportunity for which he wished. As Mr. Dilke points out, at the very time Swift and Pope were collecting their miscellanies: and here seemed a favourable opportunity for turning off upon the obscure Wagstaffe, works which they did not desire to own.

The proof of Mr. Dilke's hypothesis, which is almost irresistible, rests on several grounds. Even by the admission of the writer of the biography, Wagstaffe could not correspond to the author of the *Character of Steele*. Wagstaffe, it is stated, "when he wrote it, did not even know Steele by sight." Yet, in the first paragraph, the *Character* refers to Steele's "short face": and almost every line shows it to have been the work of one who had a personal pique against Steele. The pieces in the volume all belong to the years when Swift was in London, and was defending the views they contain, between 1710 and 1714: Wagstaffe lived till 1725, and, with so facile a pen, produced nothing more! The collector asserts that Wagstaffe kept his anonymity strictly: yet within a year after Wagstaffe's death, this nameless editor is able to publish a volume, which ascribes a tolerably long list of works to him, with no hint of a doubt in any case.

But, further, the *Character of Steele*, at least, if nothing more in the volume, is filled with marks of Swift's style.

¹ The nearest tie I can find is Swift's friendship for Sir Charles Bernard, the Physician of St. Bartholomew's, whose daughter Wagstaffe married. In the *Journal*, Swift speaks first of going to see the library of "poor Charles Bernard," which was to be sold: and then of attending the sale, to little purpose.

Throughout the volume there are references, which seem to bespeak Swift's hand.¹ The author of *Gulliveriana* ascribes the *Character* to Swift: and in the *Englishman*, Steele refers, not obscurely, to Swift as its writer. The *Character* refers to those charges of Steele's ingratitude to the patrons who kept him in office, which Swift brings against him in his letter of 13th May, 1713. Even the relenting towards Steele which the biography expresses,² is not unlikely to have been dictated by some memory of former friendship, surviving in Swift, when their quarrel had been dead and buried for a dozen years.

Lastly, there is a curious point brought out by Mr. Dilke, in regard to the letter from Dr. Andrew Tripe,³ printed in the volume. That letter is occupied largely either with medical metaphors or details. It is entirely different from the letter from Dr. Andrew Tripe to Nestor Ironside, which was one of the Scriblerus Club productions, and is generally printed amongst Swift's works.⁴ But when Pope is endeavouring to shift off from his own or his confederates' shoulders, the authorship of the latter, he writes thus: "We are assured by another that he (*i.e.* Pope) wrote a pamphlet called Dr. Andrew Tripe, which proved to be one Dr. Wagstaffe's."⁵ Pope was here clearly endeavouring to turn his readers off the scent, by identifying the Scriblerian, Dr. Andrew Tripe, with the

¹ The indications are slight separately, but almost convincing, in union. Amongst others, see p. 220, where the danger of Tory disunion is sketched in a few sentences amazingly like Swift: also p. 224, where there is a quotation from Swift's favourite, Rochefoucauld: p. 208, where there is a reference to the feeble answers to the *Conduct of the Allies*: p. 95, where Burnet and Ridpath are conjoined, exactly as Swift would have conjoined them; and p. 209, where Ormond, Oxford, and Bolingbroke, are sketched with just the colouring Swift would have employed.

² The *Character*, the preface says, does want some apology, for its treatment of a gentleman of known parts and abilities.

³ Its title runs: *A Letter from the facetious Dr. Andrew Tripe, at Bath, to his loving brother, the profound Greshamite, showing, etc.*

⁴ Scott's 2nd edition, iv. 279.

⁵ The *Dunciad*, quarto edition of 1743. Testimonies of Authors, xxv.

medical treatise to the Greshamite, which may really have been written by Wagstaffe, and which had just been published in the so-called Wagstaffe volume, by his literary ally, Swift.

On the whole then we may take it that Wagstaffe, though he may have been an occasional scribbler, was neither the author of all the pieces in the volume, nor even (as Scott supposes) an "under-spur-leather" to Swift: but that Swift was in the main responsible for the volume, and that the most important pieces in it are from his own hand.

Mr. Dilke mentions, in connexion with this disguise, the fact that Swift published his *Polite Conversations* under the name of Simon Wagstaff. But it is doubtful whether this is a confirmation of the former personation, and not rather the reverse. If a man called himself *Simon Wagstaff* in 1738, it is rather against than in favour of the theory that he published his tracts under the name of Dr. *William Wagstaffe* in 1726.

The surname was also used as a disguise by Oldisworth, in annotations which he published on the *Tatler* (nominally translated from the French), in 1711, under the name of *Walter Wagstaff, Esq.*

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